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High vis, low priority

Chris Boardman's no-nonsense approach to safer cycling



Good on yer Chris Boardman. It's increasingly rare to have anyone in even a vaguely political role speak frankly and honestly these days. That's certainly not a criticism that can be levelled at British Cycling's policy adviser for daring to speak his mind about cycling safety issues.

Never has anyone caused such controversy for not wearing a helmet as Boardman did in a film clip shown on *BBC Breakfast* last week.

"I understand exactly why people feel so passionately about helmets or high-vis. I understand why people wish to use them.

But these actions seek to deal with an effect," he said after the broadcast.

"I want to focus the debate on the cause, and campaign for things that will really make cycling safe. That is why I won't promote high-vis and helmets; I won't let the debate be drawn onto a topic that isn't even in the top 10 things that will really keep people who want to cycle safe."

The former Olympic champion drew plenty of support at cyclingweekly.co.uk where a consensus agreed that helmets are injury mitigation and not really prevention.

We all know that whether you choose to wear a helmet or not really isn't the issue. Only a wholesale change in infrastructure and attitude will truly make cycling safer.

Robert Garbutt,
Editor

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FURORE OVER HELMETLESS HERO

Boardman's bare bounce sparks storm

Nick Bull in Birmingham

Chris Boardman helped put cycle safety on the national agenda last week, largely because of his appearance on BBC's *Breakfast*.

Boardman, British Cycling's policy advisor, took part in a feature for the programme's week of special reports about cycle safety. However, his decision not to wear a helmet in the short film led to it becoming national news.

Nonetheless, such is Boardman's gravitas, his contributions for the BBC came through the corporation's willingness to debate cycling, instead of being a reactionary response to the issue at hand.

"I think we've got about 12 months in this general election period to push cycle safety," he told *Cycling Weekly*. "Cycling is fashionable now, as big as it's going to be unless it gets — and this is a horrible word — traction.

"If it gets a foot in the door, it can move forward. But equally it could slip backwards. Cultural change is slow, that's why it's painful, and while I have no problems with helmets and hi-vis clothing, they're not what we should be discussing during a valuable three-minute piece on cycle safety."

By virtue of his role working for BC, Boardman has become the national figurehead in campaigning for cycle safety, even if the 46-year-old Olympic champion did not endorse that status himself.

"I'm novel because of what I used to do for a job — that helped me get a foot in the door. I don't mind being controversial, which makes it newsworthy. The policy advisor bit means BC don't have to be responsible for me!"

"Cycle safety is the biggest and most passionate topic I've got. It's a battle worth fighting —

it's probably adding up to about 60 working days a year."

Hidden in plain sight

Boardman also wrote a piece for the BBC's website explaining why he doesn't let his eight-year-old daughter cycle on the road, and appeared at an event in Birmingham on Friday that advocated cycle training for children to combat obesity.

"These, together with the helmet debate, are massively linked," he told *Cycling Weekly*. "It's about where you live, and what you want that place to be like and look like."

"Where you have healthy populations, things such as cycling infrastructure are hidden in plain sight, they're built into people's lives."

To watch the video of Chris Boardman's appearance on BBC Breakfast, visit po.st/BoardmanBBCvideo



EMOTIONS RUN HIGH AFTER CYCLING SAFETY DEBATE

Boardman on the BBC backlash

"British Cycling instigated the BBC *Breakfast*'s week of focusing on cycling," says Boardman. "We went to see James Harding, who helped push the *Times*'s 'Cycling Fit For Cities' campaign before he joined BBC News. He said he'd do something with cycling — he mentioned BBC *Breakfast* and *Panorama* as possible programmes for it, and I wanted to do both."

"After that, it went out of our control. There are a lot of people in the middle at the BBC who are a bit paranoid,

that's how the focus of the week's reports ended up being about headphones and things like that.

"The piece I appeared in was filmed in Manchester a couple of weeks ago, and the idea was to ride with a presenter from Media City to a main train station, a journey that a lot of people do."

"Within about 20 minutes of it being broadcast, I was kicking myself because I could have and should have anticipated the reaction it would provoke. I wrote a

piece for the British Cycling website that went online later that day.

"I got probably between 1,000 and 2,000 tweets in response to the clip. Those I replied to had a reasonable stance; they weren't just ranting, they were trying to make a case."

"But it was a fascinating learning experience — in 24 hours, people's attitudes changed right around. The piece on the BC website opened up people's initial emotional stance, from that

of uproar because some guy had ridden a bike on television in normal clothes, to people then being receptive to listening. Once I had given them a considered piece, a lot of people said 'fair enough'."

"The funny thing is, hand on heart I haven't seen any of the BBC's output — not even the piece I was in. It's emotive for me — I get frustrated and upset and to an extent scared that people can be so illogical and unable to listen and make decisions in the way that they do."



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"In Utrecht in the Netherlands... helmet use is less than 0.5 per cent and there isn't a stitch of high vis in sight. They have an incredible safety record."

Boardman opens round one

NATIONAL TREASURE

Why we should back Boardman

Comment by Nick Bull

Until Chris Boardman's appearance on BBC Breakfast, the campaign for cycle safety had arguably not been so public since Bradley Wiggins was knocked off his bike almost exactly two years earlier.

Yes, a big reason behind this was the BBC's decision to broadcast a series of special reports on the issue. But the way Boardman's position as British Cycling's policy advisor has morphed into him becoming the national spokesperson must also be considered.

Boardman is the perfect person for such a role. His racing career means he has a high profile, he comes with media experience and is not afraid to be controversial or to provoke debate.

Furthermore, his written response to the helmet furore as published on the BC website (read online at po.st/BoardmanResponse) was both thought-provoking and measured.

Given that current athletes are unlikely to get involved in such matters (due to not wanting to jeopardise lucrative sponsorship deals), and people from other campaigning organisations lack the gravitas of Boardman, our support for him should be unwavering.



BIOLOGICAL PASSPORT BLOCKS BOTTRILL

Has the UCI made the Hour record too exclusive?

Michael Hutchinson

The changes to the World Hour record introduced by the UCI earlier this year didn't only alter the rules dictating which bikes and riding positions can be used. For the first time, the rider has to be part of the anti-doping biological passport programme, which monitors blood values over an extended period for irregularities that may demonstrate blood-doping practices.

Over the summer, this forced British 25-mile time trial champion Matt Bottrill to abandon an Hour attempt he had planned for August — well before the successful rides of Jens Voigt (Trek Factory Racing) and Matthias Brändle (IAM Cycling) — because Bottrill wasn't on the programme.

"When we got the regulations about the Hour, there was nothing there about the bio passport," said Bottrill. "In fact, a lot of the rest of the regulations weren't very clear either — even things like whether tri-bars were allowed. When we

checked with the UCI if the bio passport was required, they said it was.

"I could apply for it, but because it wasn't in the regulations, I didn't even know it was a requirement. If I had, with the huge cost involved and the length of time you have to be on the scheme before you can make an attempt, I don't think I'd have looked at the record."

UCI response

Talking at the Brändle record ride in Switzerland recently, in reference to Bottrill's case, UCI president Brian Cookson said, "I can see why Matt doesn't like it, but we told him about it the first time he contacted us. It wasn't like we made it up. Matt's a great rider on the UK scene, but if someone from any other country, not on a pro team, not part of the anti-doping monitoring programme broke the record, people would ask us, 'Why did you let this happen? Who is this guy?'"

Cookson had an interesting suggestion for Bottrill: "I don't understand why Matt didn't press on with his project, and attack



the British Hour record. If he'd done that, and set a distance that was further than the world record, he'd have had an opportunity to make us at the UCI look pretty silly."

Bottrill says that the British record was not something he considered seriously: "I didn't look at the British record because I was thinking about the world record, and breaking the British record doesn't really compare. When you go to sponsors and say you're planning to break the world record and then you go back and say you're going for the British record instead, with much less coverage and so on, well, putting on an attempt [requires too much] money for that."

"Another problem with the bio passport is that if it

applies to the Hour, surely it ought to apply to all the other records, like the pursuit? But it doesn't."

Graeme Obree, who made two successful attempts on the Hour, supports the UCI's firm stance.

"I'm in favour of the bio passport and the Hour — above all the Hour needs integrity," he said. "If you're willing to break the record, then you should do it. My proviso is that the passport must be available to someone who is serious about the record at a reasonable cost. An amateur or a club rider should have it subsidised by the governing body. Maybe they do a trial or something — say, half an hour's ride within a certain margin of the record pace — and then get on to the passport

Photos: AP/Press Association Images, Andy Jones



Bottrill: denied his chance?



Brändle: man to beat

scheme at a reasonable cost. It [the passport] shouldn't be something that excludes riders from having a go at it. In the end it's there to protect riders, to keep the event clean."

POWER OF THE HOUR

Bike makers love record breakers

THE FIRST BIKE to break the revised, unified Hour record was Jens Voigt's Trek. Eric BJORLING, brand communications director at Trek, tells *Cycling Weekly* why bike manufacturers have fallen in love with the Hour record



What did Trek get out of Jens Voigt's Hour record accomplishment?

Eric BJORLING: The Hour record turned out to be the biggest day of web traffic that trekbikes.com has ever had. We streamed coverage to the US. It was this perfect storm: a big, marketable personality who was really well known, and a lot of people were curious about reviving this event.

CW What makes the Hour record appeal to manufacturers?

EB: It's funny because the idea is that you're watching a human being riding a bicycle round a circle for an hour, and if you pitch it that way, then people are going to give you a funny look. But it's great for spectators: it's just one hour, and with all the analytics you can get, a fan can dive deeper into the whole experience than they can with a stage race.

CW How could you make the Hour record even better?

EB: If you watch a

football match in America, there are all of these graphics and things going on, and that's what you can have with the Hour record. You could have power numbers, speed, splits, last lap times.

CW Can the modern-day Hour record bikes still be interesting?

EB: Yes, because every brand brings something a little different. The bike that Scott rolled out for their attempt [with Matthias Brändle] looked very different to the Trek Speed Concept that Jens rode. I'm very curious to see what comes next.

CW Can manufacturers persuade their sponsored athletes to have a go at the Hour?

EB: It has to start with the athlete; they have to want to go at it. Trek never went to Jens and said: "Hey, we want you to try this." It's such a hard thing to do; any brand that pushes their athlete to do it is probably doing their athlete a disservice.

CW Would a failed attempt be bad for a manufacturer?

EB: I don't think so, not right now with all the interest in it. No one would say there must be something wrong with all Trek bikes if the athlete didn't make it. The Hour record is a celebration of the sport and the heritage than it is a tech race.



Jens Voigt breathed new life into the Hour record



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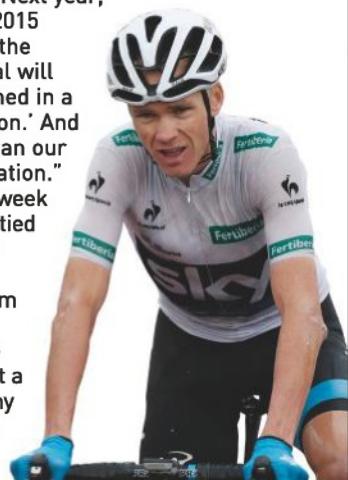
Bridegroom Froome ponders where to bloom

Newlywed Chris Froome might ride the Tour de France after all, according to French sports daily *L'Equipe*, due to the risks of colder temperatures and pollen allergies at the Giro d'Italia in May. Meanwhile a Vuelta participation could still be on the cards thanks to the inclusion of a long, flat time trial at the end.

"Froome said after this year's defeat, 'Thank you, Javier, but could these time trials in the Vuelta be flatter?'" Vuelta director Javier Guillén told Spain's *El País* newspaper last week. "And I said to him, 'Next year, for the 2015

edition, the time trial will be planned in a flat region.' And that began our conversation."

Last week Froome tied the knot with his long-term partner Michelle Cound at a ceremony in South Africa.



LAST WEEK...

- Trek announced that it would sponsor the newly UCI-registered Matrix Fitness women's team in 2015.
- Dani King (Wiggle-Honda) suffered five broken ribs and a collapsed lung after a training crash in South Wales.
- The UCI announced the IAM Cycling team were likely to receive a WorldTour licence for 2015.
- Niki Terpstra won the final ever edition of the Amstel Curaçao race.

Harris hits form in Euros

Nikki Harris finished third to Samme Cant at the European Cyclo-Cross Championships in Lorsch, Germany, on Saturday, with defending champion Helen Wyman fourth. Hannah Payton finished 13th in the junior women's race. Wyman also finished second in the following day's Superprestige in Ruddervoorde, narrowly missing out on a particularly ironic prize: a shower.

After victory the previous weekend at the Koppenbergcross, British junior Dan Tulett took another win in the junior men's race.



Nikki Harris: third in Germany

Sympathy for the Devil?

After over 20 years jumping up and down alongside the Tour de France in a skin-tight red costume, Didi 'The Devil' Senft will hang up his trident this winter, citing recent ill health and a lack of sponsorship. The 62-year-old German also holds the record for having created the world's largest rideable bike — a 150kg monster with 3.3m-diameter wheels — and runs a bicycle museum in Germany.



Devil: hanging up his horns

Huddersfield chairman succumbs to injuries

Chairman of the Huddersfield and District CTC, John Radford, passed away on November 5, over a year after suffering brain damage when he was struck by a car near Huddersfield, on July 31, 2013. The driver of the car, Michael Gledhill, was found guilty in October of causing serious injury by dangerous driving, and was told to expect a prison sentence when he is sentenced later this month.

Rapha profits reach for the Sky

Replica Team Sky jerseys and kit have helped cycling clothing company Rapha record a 40 per cent increase in revenue for a third consecutive year, it was announced last week. Having become the British team's official clothing partner in 2013, Rapha has extended its Sky range to include more affordable kit as well as supporter T-shirts, umbrellas and flags. Sky products account for 15-20 per cent of the firm's sales.



2015 Cycling Calendar

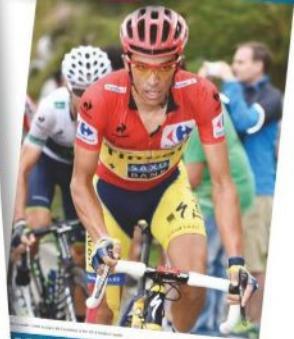
France 2 mend fences with Hoogerland

Over three years after being sent flying into a barbed wire fence at the 2011 Tour de France, Dutch rider Johnny Hoogerland has finally received an insurance payout from the company representing France 2, whose driver was behind the wheel of the media vehicle that caused the crash. Hoogerland's lawyers had requested €400,000, but did not confirm the final sum of the payout. "I'm just glad that I can cross it off my list," said Hoogerland.



Hoogerland: refrained from barbed comments after payout

SIZZLING BRITS TURN UP THE HEAT IN MEXICO
Great Britain's men's team sprinters continued their build-up to the Rio Olympics with gold at this winter's opening track World Cup round in Guadalajara, Mexico, last weekend. Philip Hindes, Jason Kenny and new man-three Callum Skinner beat Germany before Kenny took silver in the individual sprint and fourth in the keirin. There was also a gold medal ahead of Canada for the women's team pursuiters, while their male counterparts won silver behind Australia. Tickets are still available for the next round of the competition, in London on December 5-7.



2015 Cycling Calendar

This Anniversary edition contains a 50-50 mix of action and scenery shots, with images from the Classics, Giro, Tour and Vuelta to complement race shots of Cancellara, Matthews, Nibali, Contador and Wiggins. Once again Graham's calendar features all the major race-dates for 2015, so you can start planning right away!

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Roe heading Down Under

Kenny Pryde

Scottish rider Eileen Roe, the latest signing to the Wiggle-Honda UCI women's pro team, is having a shorter off-season than usual. The 24-year-old has already discussed her 2015 road race programme with the team and it will start with a criterium in Tasmania next month, followed by a run of

Australian races — the Bay Crits and the Tour Down Under.

"The whole thing has happened quite fast," said reigning British criterium champion Roe after finishing fifth in the Auchentoshan round of the Ridley Scottish Cyclo-Cross Series. "I had a discussion with the directeur sportif last week and my programme is 75 per cent fixed; the rest of it will

depend on form and how everyone else is going or who is sick or injured, but it'll be a European-based programme. I'm really excited. I actually got the offer from the team just after RideLondon, when I was in the airport heading on holiday. I hadn't sent out my CV for 2015 at that point, but I didn't hesitate to take the place. If I had

stalled, it would have gone to someone else and I would have regretted it for the rest of my life."

Roe was back in the mud after a six-week break to get over a chest infection. "I've raced quite a bit of cross in the past and I'd love to race in Belgium again — I love all the racing over there — but today just felt brutal, like a long interval session!"

OBITUARY

Alan Hewitt

Kenny Pryde

Cycling lost a huge and popular personality this month when Alan Hewitt succumbed to a long illness. Hewitt, 54, was a former Scottish national team coach, mechanic, bike shop owner and talented rider. Hewitt had also worked with Shimano distributor Madison, training mechanics, and was a well-known figure throughout Great Britain and Ireland.

Following the diagnosis of his illness, Hewitt had kept a slightly lower profile, but his technical knowledge and talents as a joke-teller and raconteur

were legendary, and he was always a popular guest wherever he went.

Hewitt started riding with the Regent CC in Glasgow and set several Scottish time trial records in the mid-1980s before opening a Glasgow bike shop. He acted as a mechanic to the Scottish national team in the underfunded early 1990s, when road racing was in the doldrums and Lottery funding for the sport was still years away. Together with Scottish Cycling Union team manager (now SC president) Alasdair MacLennan, Hewitt was instrumental in keeping the wheels rolling, in every sense.

After a stint managing the Scottish junior teams, in 1994 Hewitt took over as Scottish national team coach and led a squad of riders to the Commonwealth Games in Victoria,



Alan Hewitt — rolling raconteur

Canada, which is fondly remembered by all participants. Hewitt stepped down from management after Victoria and went on to work in the bike industry for several years, though he remained an unstinting supporter of riders and the sport in general.

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CHARITY BASH GARNERS OVER £45K

Shower of stars at Dave Rayner fundraiser

Stars including Lizzie Armitstead, David Millar, Adam and Simon Yates and Brian Robinson celebrated 20 years of the Dave Rayner Fund last Saturday at the fund's biggest ever fundraising dinner. Taking place at New Dock Hall, in Leeds, more than 500 guests helped raise over £20,000

for the charity, which supports young British amateur riders to race abroad.

A further £25,000 came from the proceeds of a bicycle and art exhibition in Harrogate this summer organised by Poliform North, with £25,000 also going to the Yorkshire Air Ambulance.



Star turn: Lizzie Armitstead



This year's supported riders take to the stage

Win for Wales seniors in Inter Area Championships

Frazer Snowdon

Wales returned from Sunday's Inter Area Team Championships in Derbyshire as senior champions, after holding off defending champions Yorkshire on Sunday.

Held at Hardwick Hall in Chesterfield — just a few miles from the Yorkshire border — there was strength in numbers in all categories for the White Rose riders. But they only managed to win two categories, women and veterans, while the host region of East Midlands took victory in both the youth boys and youth girls.

Wales were convincing winners of the senior race, with **Steven Roach**, **Lee Williams**, **Dylan Kerfoot-Robson** and **Tim Davies** making up their winning team, with Yorkshire second ahead of East Midlands.

Yorkshire teams were first and

second in the veterans category with North East third. In the women's category, however, East Midlands prevented Yorkshire from taking a one-two, with Yorkshire A comfortably first and Yorkshire B third.

Elsewhere, **Steve James** (Hargroves Cycles) won round nine of the Wessex League at Oxford, two minutes clear of Dan Guest (Performance Cycles).

Matt Webber (Hackney GT) and **Matt Holmes** (Arctic Tacx) continued their Eastern League rivalry with a win each in round nine and 10 over the weekend, at Bury St Edmunds and Colchester respectively.

Sleaford Wheelers' George Thompson took a fifth win in the Lincolnshire League, at Woodhall Spa on Sunday, holding off Mark Cotton (Bike Box Alan) to strengthen his overall lead.



Inter Area Team Champs

There was also a fifth win of the season, and a third consecutive victory, for **Giles Drake** (Leisure Lakes) in the North West League race in Cumbria.

Well-travelled **Steven Roach** (Ride Coventry) won round eight of the Notts and Derby League, to add to victories in the Welsh, Western and West Midlands leagues already this season.

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BUDGET AIRLINE OFFERS CYCLING TRIPS

Jet-propelled riding holidays



Trevor Ward

As more mainstream businesses recognise the value of the 'Lycra pound', Jet2.com has become the first budget airline to offer dedicated cycling holidays.

It is seeking to exploit the spending power of UK cyclists, who invested £745 million in their hobby last year, according to economic analyst Mintel.

Fashion brands such as Ted Baker, Levi's and Paul Smith already target this lucrative market with cycling-specific clothing ranges (see pages 28-33 for more), while the latest TV ads from the Bank of Scotland and BMW are unashamedly aimed at well-heeled road cyclists. Elsewhere, everyone from Jaguar cars to 21st Century Fox is jumping on the Team Sky bandwagon.

Now the battle for the Lycra pound has taken to the skies. While Jet2.com leads the way, other airlines

have either increased their weight allowances for bikes, streamlined the booking process or promoted more cycling features in their in-flight magazines.

All of which is a far cry from the bad old days — before Bradley Wiggins became a household name — when budget airlines generally treated cyclists with a degree of contempt normally reserved for bankers or politicians.

For example, while you

had to look under "Carpet Bowls and Surfboards" for information on how to book your bike on a flight with Monarch Airlines, the process with Jet2.com used to be even more complex, involving premium rate telephone calls to a call centre in South Africa and hidden 'drop-off' fees of £6 each way on top of the £30 carriage charge.

Things weren't much better at EasyJet or Ryanair where big prices or tiny weight allowances made

transporting your bike by air a costly affair.

But now Leeds-based Jet2.com, inspired by this year's Yorkshire Grand Départ of the Tour de France, is offering a range of cycling holidays to destinations including Majorca, the Canary Islands and mainland Spain. The company's CEO Steve Heapy puts it down to simple business sense: "Cycling is seeing an increase in popularity on the back of the UK's Olympic legacy and the



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CYCLING ABROAD WITH JET2

Lanzarote

A week-long package with flights for two people at the Costa Calero Hotel in Lanzarote with Jet2 Holidays would cost £1,500 (all-inclusive) or £1,242 (B&B) next February. Bike hire from the hotel starts at €120 a week, though we found Peter at www.lanzarote-cycling.com (same price, free delivery) to be more knowledgeable about routes. More info at: www.jet2holidays.com.



Sampling a Jet2 cycling trip to the Canaries

Grand Départ in Yorkshire. It therefore made sense to cater for this growing demand by launching bespoke cycling holidays to some of the most popular biking destinations in Europe."

Rival airlines haven't ruled out following suit. EasyJet, which earlier this year reinstated its 32kg weight allowance for bikes following protests after it was reduced to 23kg, told *CW*: "We do recognise that there are

opportunities for growth in that area and it is something we will be considering for the future."

Ryanair told us: "We'll always consider any improvements to our customer experience."

So what is the Jet2 Cycling Holiday experience actually like? *CW* was invited to trial a holiday on Lanzarote, staying at the four-star Costa Calero hotel which offered bike hire (at

a supplement), storage and a workshop. The hotel, its three outdoor pools, gym and all-you-can-eat buffets for breakfast and dinner, were a cyclist's dream.

The BMC hire bikes were excellent, though the fitting offered to one member of our party wasn't particularly good. Route information was also a bit vague, with one distance given as "about 50km" when in reality it was only 29km.

"Airlines are looking to exploit the spending power of UK cyclists"

We were offered a guided ride but opted to do our own thing, heading out for a 125km circuit around the north of the island and the stunning Mirador del Rio viewpoint. The highest road on the island is a mere 600m, but the terrain is lumpy enough to ensure a decent workout.

With a bit more thought about route options, Jet2.com could quickly become the cyclist's favourite airline.



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BUCKS TOWN HOSTS CYCLO-CROSS WORLD CUP

Milton Keynes welcomes the world

Kenny Pryde

Saturday November 29 will see the world's best cyclo-cross riders line up in Campbell Park, Milton Keynes, for round three of the six-race UCI cyclo-cross World Cup. It's quite a coup for organiser Simon Burney, an indefatigable cheerleader for the international off-road scene for decades, since it's the first World Cup cyclo-cross race ever to have taken place outside of continental Europe.

"It's something I've wanted to do for years," explained Burney. "When you look at the other cycling events that Britain has put on — road, track and off-road — in the last 15 years, it seemed right that we should have a world-class

cyclo-cross race too; Britain is a big enough cycling country now.

"The last time Britain had a really big cyclo-cross event was the World Championships at Leeds in 1992 [Ipswich hosted the European Championships in 2012]. I kept on meeting British fans at the Koksijde round asking me why we couldn't put on a race."

Burney put in the bid to host the event and when it was announced that his bid had been accepted he began to realise the size of the task: "It's really just me and a few friends; it's not like there's a big organisation and, although I've organised local races over the years, this is a big step up!"

Happily, Burney's 30 years on

the circuit — as well as his work as a UCI technical delegate — means he knows where to go for expertise if he gets stuck.

Cyclo-cross is undergoing a resurgence that parallels the new-found popularity of other forms of cycling, an observation borne out by the fact that the National Trophy support races on the Sunday following the World Cup are oversubscribed. "The support races were something I was keen to do because in Europe, the pros race on Saturday and everyone goes home, but I wanted national-level riders to be able to race on the same course as they had watched the previous day," Burney said. "It means people can make a real weekend of it."



CYCLING
IN MY CITY

Wakefield

Sandy Clark, Chair,
Wakefield District Cycle Forum

Wakefield Metropolitan District Council has not been noted for its enthusiasm for or promotion of cycling. This reached an all-time low in 2007 when the entire 'healthy transport' team, which had included a cycle officer, was disbanded.

The Wakefield District Cycle Forum was subsequently set up. It's an independent, voluntary community group campaigning for better cycle infrastructure and promoting cycling in the district. Relations between council and forum were heated at times, but over the last couple of years we have built a fruitful partnership. At the centre of this was the decision of the

Cycle Forum to start doing things ourselves.

In 2012, the forum won a £100,000 grant for five kilometres of new bridleway connecting the south-east of the city to a network of bridleways and cycle paths. The forum managed the project, making maps and signs for the routes, and provides labour and organisation for clearing and surfacing the paths. Using this template, we built three more all-weather cycle tracks, bringing us closer to our ambition of an extensive network of traffic-free cycle tracks to the east of Wakefield city.

We also run an extensive year-round programme of guided rides and events

"We run extensive year-round guided rides and events"



Wakefield's cycling community has risen from its slumber

mostly for people who want to get back on their bike. Between January and July, we ran around 70 rides, most with around 43 per cent female participants.

Most rides are run from three 'cycle hubs', developed in partnership with two council-run parks

and the National Trust at Nostell Priory. These hubs also host promotional events, 'bike doctor' sessions and cycle maintenance courses. We are in the process of developing a further hub in Castleford, with the local heritage group.



WC CX is coming to MK

On the 'hup'

Hamstrung by the fact that it's not an Olympic sport, there's no doubt that cyclo-cross is on the rise. "I'd say that in the last six or eight years cross in Britain has grown a lot to the point at which local cyclo-cross leagues are running out of space at events," said Simon Burney. "Organisers put on free-to-enter under-12 races which in the past would have had 20 competitors; now there are so many riders that they have to split the field into under-10s and under-12s. It's great to see, even if it's causing problems with infrastructure."

"The cross resurgence parallels the popularity of other forms of cycling"

Although there was an option to use an established cyclo-cross course at Milton Keynes Bowl, the proximity of Campbell Park to the town centre — "it's a perfect location" enthused Burney — helped tip the balance "and Milton Keynes has really got behind the event." www.miltonkeynesworldcupx.com

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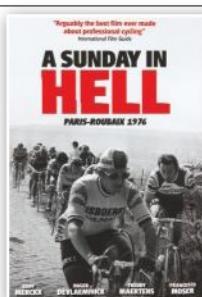


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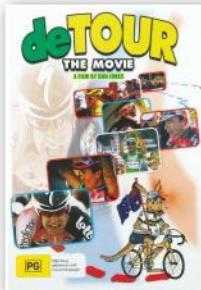
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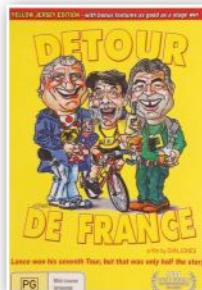
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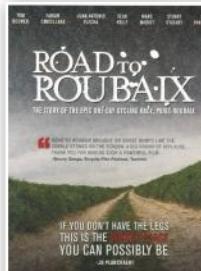
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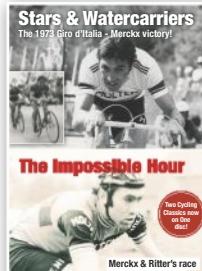
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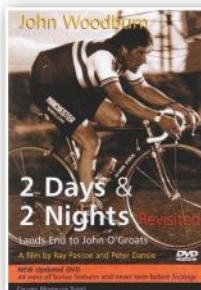
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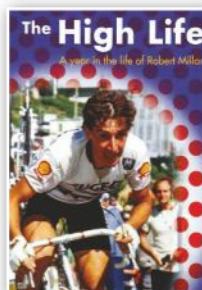
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A Year in the Life of Robert Millar In this unique film made in 1985 with the eyes of the UK on him, the camera records his feelings about the year, his performance and morale within the team. **Running time 119 minutes**

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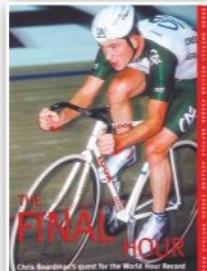


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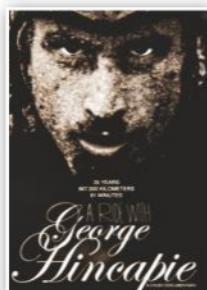
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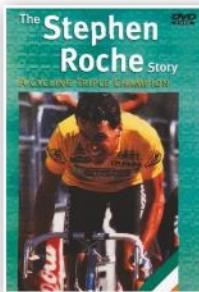
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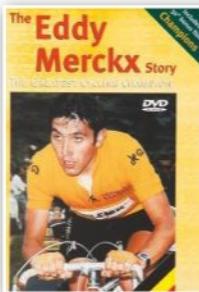
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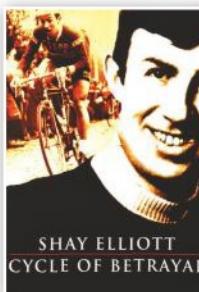
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Shay Elliott was a hero of cycling and enjoyed the trappings of sporting stardom. But as his professional career came to a close, his personal life began to unravel, costing him his savings, his marriage, and ultimately concluding in his untimely and tragic death in 1971.
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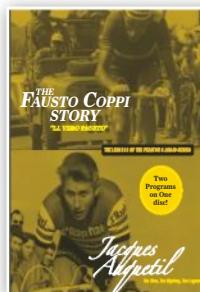


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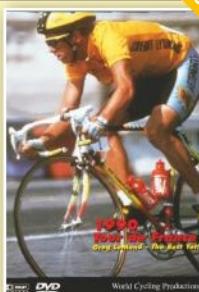
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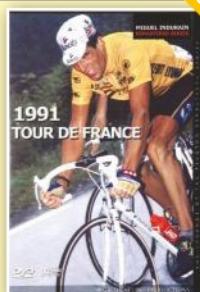
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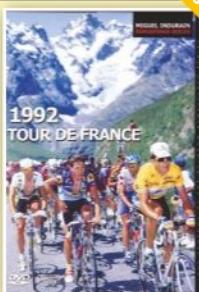
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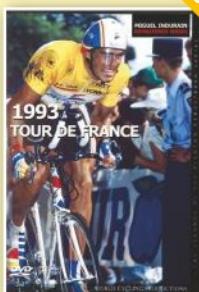


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Who said Miguel Indurain never attacked in the mountains? His fourth Tour de France win came thanks to a dramatic switch of tactics, as Indurain and future World Champion Luc Leblanc go on the rampage in the rainswept Pyrenees. Commentaries by Phil Liggett and Paul Sherwen
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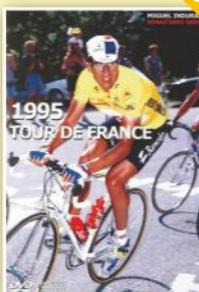
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When Miguel Indurain makes a knock-out early blow in the Ardennes - "it was like following a motorbike" was how Armstrong's future manager, Johan Bruyneel would describe his efforts to follow him - the Tour de France seems as good as decided. Commentaries by Phil Liggett and Paul Sherwen.
RT 124 minutes



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WRITE TO REPLY

Lids v meds? It is brain surgery

Regarding Barry's letter 'Lacerated but alive' (CW Oct 23), I was involved in a similar accident in July. My boyfriend and I were on a bicycle ride when we were smashed into from behind by a car whose driver had fallen asleep at the wheel.

I broke seven bones and had over 65 stitches on my body. My boyfriend required emergency brain surgery but thankfully, four months on, we have both made a substantial recovery.

Unlike Barry, we were not wearing helmets at the time of the accident.

This is our choice, and I embrace the UK government for allowing us the freedom to do so. I feel there should be more emphasis on educating drivers about the vulnerability of cyclists — making them more accountable. I'm sure that if we had been wearing a helmet at the time of the accident, observers would now be praising the helmets for saving our lives — but we weren't and they didn't.

The truth is, for anyone involved in a serious accident, it's the brilliance of 21st-century medicine and the skill and expertise of amazing healthcare professionals that save our lives.

We can never really know whether wearing a helmet does alter the survival rates, but every cyclist who survives a serious accident can say, acknowledge and thank the amazing doctors and nurses who definitely do save our lives.

Martyn Wotton, email



Do lids save lives or is it just helmet hype?

Letter of the week...
Lazer O2 helmet worth £69.99



Names to places

What great racing at the London Revolution meeting, with the youngsters putting on a particularly good show. I would have liked the programme to tell us where each rider was from, though, so that we could have shouted support — and

perhaps even visit their local tracks to follow their progression. I feel it's silly to label them as though riding for professional teams just for the night and unfair to the clubs that have brought them on so far and no doubt will be there in the following weeks when the glamorous Revolution meetings have moved on.

Bill Leverington, email

Ventoux at 80

Having just reached 80, I thought I ought to do something really special to celebrate. With the 'Boris bike Mont Ventoux' triumph in mind, I thought I should do a similar thing. Instead of getting there and back in 24 hours, I would allow myself one overnight stay on the trip down to Provence and another on the way back, leaving just one day to carry out my wish.

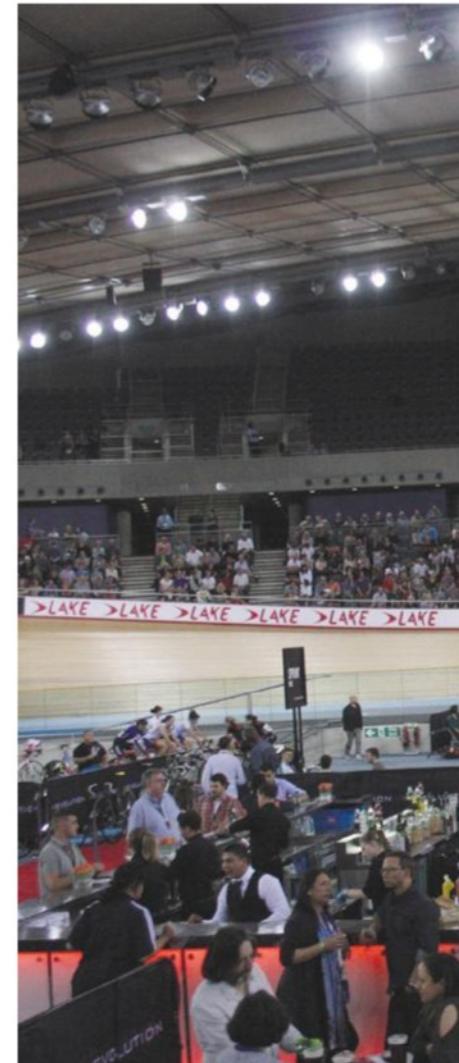
Accompanied by my young 72-year-old club-mate, I drove 760 miles to our base in Vaison, arriving on the Sunday. The next morning we rode 20 miles to Bedoin, which is the hardest route. With temperatures in the high twenties, we had to face the mistral wind once we left the tree-line, making the 13-mile ascent even harder. We eventually arrived at the top, where it was exceedingly cold, in two hours, 20 minutes — only stopping to pay our respects to Tommy Simpson.

We donned our weather-proofs and hurtled down to the warmth of Malaucène for coffee. After one more overnight stay, we arrived back in the UK on the Wednesday. Was it worth the expense and 1,520 miles of driving? You bet.

Tony Panting, email

Sorry mate, didn't see you

I was approaching a mini-roundabout in my car in bad weather conditions — low light and heavy rain — and I wanted



to turn right. I indicated as I approached, came to a halt and looked all around before moving off. There was nothing approaching from the right — or so I thought.

As I moved forward, though, all of a sudden I became aware that there was a cyclist on the roundabout to my right. Luckily, he managed to stop just in time



Riders: stay safe, motorists: stay vigilant



Grass-roots Revolution: let's acknowledge the clubs nurturing our brightest talents

and avoid ploughing into the side of my car.

The incident shook me, so goodness knows what it did for the cyclist. Reflecting afterwards, though I clearly should have seen the cyclist, he was on a black bike, in black clothing and with no lights, so he wasn't as visible as the conditions really necessitated. All the cars on the road at the time had their lights on.

Firstly, to the cyclist, my sincere apologies; secondly, to motorists, as winter approaches, please let's all take time to look and look again at junctions, especially in poor conditions. Finally, I'm off to the bike shop to upgrade my bike lights for when the boot is on the other foot.

Richard, email

Let protection prevail

I wear cycling shoes with a hard sole to take the cleat and protect my feet from metal pedals. I wear cycling nicks to be comfortable in the saddle area. I wear leather

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mitts to protect my hands from abrasion, sunburn and skin damage if in contact with the road. I wear a jersey with roll-able long sleeves to protect my skin from the weather. I wear sunglasses to protect my eyes from glare. I wear sunscreen to protect my skin. I ride on the left side of the road, on bike paths, trails and on the velodrome to minimise motor traffic interfering with my fitness and health.

I have worn helmets since they became available in the Eighties, to protect my head. Helmets have multiple purposes. All professional racing cyclists wear them all the time. Yes, I do fall off my bike occasionally on road, trail and velodrome. Yes, on two occasions that I remember, I have hit my helmet on the ground and not sustained any personal damage.

Call me an unfashionable old coward if you wish, but I prefer to be a live 'older' Masters 9 'coward' rather than a dead or brain-damaged hero.

David Chadderton, email

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Cycling WEEKLY FEATURE

BUYING A PRO BIKE



Photo: Yuzuru Sunada

From tool of the pro...

AMATEUR RIDERS SNAP UP EX-PRO TEAM BIKES

Buy a bike fit for a pro

CAN'T AFFORD A

range-topping bike? Then why not treat yourself to a used pro team machine?

Nick Bull

"It seemed too good to be true," explained Royal Leamington Spa Cycling Club member Gary Hibbert. "A full Canyon Aeroad CF carbon-fibre bike, with Dura-Ace Di2 and Mavic Cosmic Carbone wheels for just over £3,200."

The bike in question was that of Katusha rider Mikhail Ignatiev, who used it during the 2013 season.

Brand new, its retail price would have pushed £4,500, but because the Olympic track champion had raced on it, the purchase price was nearly 25 per cent less.



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Hibbert is just one of a number of amateur riders who has purchased a former pro team bike for themselves, which for the most part come at a reduced price.

"Ex-team bikes are a chance to own a piece of history," said Condor's brand manager Claire Beaumont, who owns the bike Dean Downing won the 2008 British Circuit Race Championships on.

"Being able to sit on a steed that has crossed the line first at a high-profile event or even won a stage race is something very few people can say when they are out on a club run!"

However, there are some notable exceptions when it comes to the used bikes costing less than brand new ones. Last year, *CW* competition winner Jackie Fraser auctioned off a Pinarello Dogma used by Chris Froome in the 2012 Tour de France for charity. A total of 25 bids were made for the bike on eBay, with the winner paying £10,250.

And the popular auction website currently has another Pinarello available for big money on offer — this one being a time trial bike raced by Miguel Indurain in 1992. The asking price? A cool £47,000.

Despite the large sums being offered for some bikes, like most things, the buying and selling of used pro team

bikes has been made more accessible by the internet.

A distinctive low-pro Gazelle frame, believed to be used in the 1994 Tour

de France by Belgian rider Hendrik Redant, has been in enthusiasts' hands now for nearly two decades.

It currently belongs to Cambridge resident Joe Sutherland, who paid just £300 for it, having seen it listed on the Retro Bikes collectors' forum.

"The uniqueness of it was what attracted me to it. It's in good condition — we contacted Hendrik, but he said he couldn't remember if he rode it or not!"

Tweak it and ride

It's said that nothing rides the same as a new bike. However, if you get lucky with your purchase then you can still enjoy that new bike feeling, albeit after a few tweaks.

"Generally, pros like their geometry long and low so if you are purchasing a bike, be prepared to play about with the stem length or book in a bike fit," added Beaumont.

Australian-based *CW* reader Paul Baybrook purchased a Vacansoleil-DCM team issue Bianchi Oltre bike from the manufacturer's distribution company in the country. He paid £5,400 for it — almost half the retail price — and has no regrets about his purchase.

"I've covered 7,000km on it so far, and I have had no problems with it at all," he said.

"Buying this bike allowed me to go way beyond my usual budget. It was used at the Tour Down Under that year for a few stages and then sold on — I'm not sure who rode it, but it could have been Thomas De Gendt.

"Be prepared to play about with the stem length"

FREE TO SEE

Where to see former pro bikes

If buying a used bike doesn't do it for you, here's where you can see some of the bikes that created cycling history.

Bradley Wiggins's 2012 Tour de France yellow Pinarello Dogma — Tolo's restaurant, Port de Pollença, Majorca.



Wiggo's Tour-winning bike

Fabian Cancellara's Olympic-winning 2008 Cervélo P3C time trial bike, along with bikes used by Tom Simpson and Johan Museeuw — Tour of Flanders museum, Oudenaarde, Belgium.

Eddy Merckx's Hour record bike from 1972 — Eddy Merckx Metro Station, Brussels, Belgium.

Hugh Porter's Carlton, used in the 1964 Olympics, and numerous World Championships — Fred Williams Cycles, Wolverhampton.

Adam Blythe's 2014 Swift Ultravox, on which he won the RideLondon Classic — The Shed bike shop, Hereford.

Bradley Wiggins's 1997 Condor — Condor HQ, London.

"There was not a mark on it that I could see and it came with a new 2012 SRAM Red groupset, as apparently someone at the distributor had taken the other one without asking."

Hibbert agreed: "It wasn't a new bike that I bought, but it was still in excellent condition. Yes, there were a few light marks on it, but nothing to detrimental to the bike's overall feel or performance," he said.

Money maker

As well as giving amateurs a chance to ride a bike used by some of the sport's biggest names, the selling off of pro bikes is good business for the teams and manufacturers.

Garmin-Sharp had nearly 50 used 2014 bikes for sale at the start of November, and will generate nearly £130,000 should they sell all of those at their current sale price.

Hibbert was among the first people to buy a used

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Canyon online — the German-based manufacturer only started selling the bikes online in July.

"We had 56 Katusha and 38 Omega Pharma-Lotto bikes ready to sell," said the company's digital marketing editor Matthew Leake.

At the time of writing, only 14 Katusha bikes remain. Among those unsold from the Omega Pharma selection are bikes with custom artwork created for Philippe Gilbert, André Greipel and Jurgen van den Broeck.

Added Leake: "The most expensive bike we have sold so far was Joaquim Rodriguez's custom UCI WorldTour leader's bike, that he rode throughout 2013. That went for €6,499 (£5,095) — it was gone within a couple of days of putting it online.

"You'll pay more for one of the custom designs as these really are one-offs that cannot be replicated. Some of Rodriguez's old bikes carry a bit of a premium too, as they were ridden to several of his biggest results since we started our partnership with Katusha back in 2012."

Problem purchases

So what are the problems with buying ex-pro team bikes? When surveyed online, CW readers said the lack of warranty was a big reason for not buying one; indeed, none of the Cervélo bikes currently being sold on by Garmin-

Sharp have such protection for the buyer.

Baybrook's Bianchi did not come with one, either — not that this put him off.

He said: "My logic was that the bikes are so over-engineered, they could easily put up with what a pro throws at it for a few stages.

"Considering I would certainly not be putting 400W through it consistently I would not be pushing an already compromised frame beyond its limits. And having seen the Tour Down Under that year, I didn't remember any Vacansoleil riders going down hard!"

However, Canyon still offers customers their normal six-year warranty with sales of the ex-pro team bikes, while Condor offer two.

"Every single frame and fork has to pass through our in-house CT scanner here in Koblenz so we can examine if there has been any damage to the integral carbon structure beyond what the naked eye can see," said Leake. "If we find any evidence of damage then the parts are rejected. We want these bikes to be ridden, not placed on a pedestal just to be looked at. Anything unfit to ride is certainly unfit for us to sell."

Another common reason listed by CW readers for not buying ex-team bikes, is that pro riders don't look after them as well as those cyclists paying big money for them.

YOUR TWEETS

Would you buy a team bike?



Andrew Warner

I would be tempted depending on who rode it. Some riders do respect their bikes and the rest just don't.

Luke Eversham

As long as it's in good condition I wouldn't mind having an ex-team bike. Be great having something with race history. If it was a classic car, people would pay a lot more as it's been raced!

Tim Kirby

What about the one Wiggo slung against a wall a couple of years ago? No, ta.

at Slipstream told me that there was no warranty on the frame.

Donella Haywood-Vignolini

Be cool to have one and make it wall art. But I doubt any pro rides any bike I could fit on. [My road bike is 44cm].

Disu Jarhead

I came very close to purchasing Emma Pooley's Cervélo S3, but ultimately decided against it when the person I was dealing with



One owner, dry miles only...

Tweaked for its new jockey

That can be the case when it comes to their training bikes, but as Beaumont points out: "Some might think that ex-team bikes are bikes that have been ridden into oblivion, but after every race each Condor Leggero team bike is handed back to the team's full-time mechanics to be cleaned, checked and lubed, and the bar tape and cables are replaced frequently throughout a season."

"Rapha Condor-JLT team riders have two or three bikes and that means they aren't riding one bike all year. Most of the bikes we get back from the team are in excellent condition, much better than a second-hand bike."

Canyon's servicing of the bikes continues once they have been handed back from the teams, too.

"We replace all the standard moving parts so each bike is delivered with new brake and gear cables, if it still has a mechanical drivetrain, as well as a new chain and new rear cassette," added Leake.

Where to look

If you're seeking to buy a pro's used bike, this is the best time of year to do so. Garmin-Sharp's merger with Cannondale for next season (and therefore a change of bicycle supplier) means that they have a wide range of bikes in the latest spec for sale. One of those is a 54cm P5 that was ridden by David Millar in his last season — it's also the only one available that comes with a mechanical groupset, and is available for just £2,815.

Canyon expect to receive 60 bikes from the Katusha and Movistar teams, and Condor will likely have a large amount of bikes used by Rapha Condor-JLT riders available for the public this winter, too.

WHERE TO BUY

On the web

Interested in buying an ex-pro team bike? Visit these websites to see what's available.

Garmin-Sharp: po.st/GarminBikes

Canyon (Movistar, Katusha, Omega Pharma-Lotto): po.st/CanyonBikes

Condor (Rapha Condor-JLT): po.st/CondorBikes



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How cycling smartened up its act

TEN YEARS SINCE Rapha blazed a sartorial trail, the smart money is on British companies when it comes to bike fashion, says Micky McMahon

Back in the Eighties and Nineties the production of cycling apparel was a distinctly Continental affair. For us in Britain this wasn't a particularly bad thing; cycle wear seemed to be having something of an identity crisis. A simple Google search reveals that, much like mainstream fashion of the time, sartorial horror shows were commonplace from the pro peloton down to the recreational rider.

There were some exceptions. Bernard Hinault, whether riding in the checks of Peugeot or the Mondrian inspired block colours of La Vie Claire, was always well turned out. Then there was the classic Brooklyn Chewing Gum team's red, white and blue, visible on the back of the eternally suave Roger de Vlaeminck. Yet most manufacturers at one stage fell

victim to a neon, colour-splash, text-overload panic.

Britain was not completely without representation during this period. Caratti and Lusso were proud British creations, albeit with Italian sounding names. Caratti was the first UK importer of Italian brands such as Castelli, Sidi, De Marchi and Colnago, and eventually developed its own range of clothing. Although Caratti disappeared for some time in the late Nineties, it re-emerged this year with a new collection.

Coffee, cake and caps

Lusso was launched in 1982 by former GB cyclist John Harrison. Harrison and his wife, a machinist, initially set out to create "a decent and comfortable pair of cycling shorts that didn't cost the earth".

As one of the few remaining British manufacturers from this era still trading today he has a unique take on how things have changed since the early Eighties.

"When we started manufacturing over 30 years ago people would have laughed at the idea of selling coffee and cakes in a bike shop! That said, the fabrics and technology have moved on leaps and bounds from the early days...The competition is far stronger now than it was 30 years ago, but at least now we can compete against the European brands on design, quality and price."

For most cyclists, the idea of "coffee and cakes in a bike shop" is something that can only be associated with Rapha. When Simon Mottram launched the company in 2004 its offering was modest. Years of dissatisfaction at the cycling clothing available led him to the tentative production of a jersey, jacket and cap. Ten years on it is one of the most recognisable brands in cycling clothing and has inspired a wealth of British designers, manufacturers and online retailers to venture into the home-grown market for bike wear.

Class divide

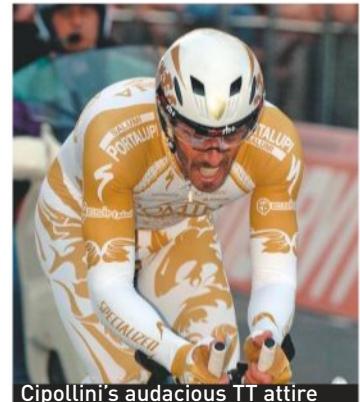
In 2013 Rapha replaced Adidas as kit suppliers to Team Sky and was highly visible as Chris Froome went on to claim the Tour de France title for the British team. The move proved canny as the company went on to report growth of 67 per cent for last year with an estimated turnover of £26.5M.

It is clear that Mottram's company has benefited hugely from the British cycling boom that began shortly after its inception. The rise in the national profile of the sport, brought about by the successes of Wiggins, Cavendish and Froome, together with a drive in cities such as London and Bristol to make urban areas cycle-friendly, has helped create a competitive marketplace for cycling apparel in Britain.

While undoubtedly producing cycling clothing of the highest quality, critics of Rapha have suggested that the price of the clothing is creating something of a class divide in cycling. Such criticism is understandable when one considers that Rapha jerseys and bib shorts can cost as much as £160 and £190 respectively, but then the option for a choice between bikes that cost £500 and those priced at £5,000 has long



Bettini's Mapei monstrosity



Cipollini's audacious TT attire



Fignon's beaming smile just about overrode his team's jersey choice

"Rapha reported growth of 67 per cent over the last year"

been there, so a large price divide in biking is nothing new.

Vulpine, created by former film executive Nick Hussey in 2012, is another example of a distinctly British brand encouraged and inspired by Rapha's success.

"Before that [Rapha] you could either cycle in tight, bright Lycra, or just fashion gear that didn't work. Rapha changed the game, and many are still catching up," Hussey says.

Vulpine places emphasis on

combining comfort and style with performance and function, producing men's and women's lines that look as good off the bike as they do in the saddle. Hussey sums up the brand's place in the market simply: "The Vulpine test is if you can walk into a slightly rough pub and not look like a dick, then it's right."

So is being a British brand simply about being synonymous with high-end style and appearance? Not according to Hussey: "I'd hate us to be defined as a fashion brand. Fashion is ethereal and based purely around look, but not performance. Our garments must work. I am obsessive about detail and real-world cycling solutions, not gimmicks."

Rapha and Vulpine produce



Rapha: retro apparel

cycling apparel that occupies the higher price points but how do they compare when it comes to value over other, less expensive home-grown options?

"Value is often defined as cheap," says Hussey, "But cheap breaks; cheap has poor customer service; cheap doesn't work. Yes, we're more expensive, but only in the cycling world. On the high street we are average. But add in all the performance and detail we offer, and you have that huge value again."

Ladies love Lycra

One area where Vulpine has seen recent success is the women's market. Since becoming part title sponsors of women's pro team Matrix Fitness-Vulpine, soon to be the home of double Olympic gold medallist Laura Trott, female customers have begun to represent a greater share of sales.

"Last year women accounted for 15 per cent of sales, and this year it's 30 per cent plus. That says something. The signing of Laura Trott for 2015 may have had a significant effect, as we have sold out of many women's lines, especially to our stockists, who you can now see ramping up for female customers more than ever."

The women's market has, as is often the case with manufacturers operating in fringe or traditionally male-dominated sports, been limited if not completely neglected for some time. Ten years ago female cyclists would often have to choose from cycle clothing and apparel designed for men and, as such, was ill-fitting and impractical.

A recent rise in the sport's popularity among women has meant that new brands, catering specifically for the needs of women cyclists, have started to address issues surrounding comfort, fit and appearance.



Cloth cuts of yesteryear are back in fashion



Inner-city cycle style



En vogue: Vulpine has explored new boundaries

Fierlan is a British company that manufacturers cycle-wear solely for women. The boutique brand, founded by Lucy Gardner and Emily Buzzo, both keen cyclists, was conceived out of a lack of options when it came to women's bike attire.

"One day we were discussing where we could get some cycling shorts and there didn't seem to

be much available for women. A lot of women's clothing was simply men's stuff in a smaller size. I thought it would be great if someone made some shorts that you didn't have to pull up all the time. Assos's women's bibshorts were good, but we wanted to do the whole range," says Gardner.

These first-hand problems were addressed when the company



A huge range of bibshorts await the discerning cycle-wear shopper

released its first collection in June of this year. The range is eye-catching and innovative, prioritising fabric quality, comfort and fit; stylistically comparisons may be drawn with Rapha when it comes to simple block colour and paneling. European manufacturing ensures the comparisons don't end there, with a jersey costing £100 and shorts starting at £95.

So what about those of us who do not have £200 to spend on a new jersey and bibs? Thankfully the rise in the number of British bike apparel companies producing clothing that is both functional and easy on the eye is not limited to the high-end market.

More kit, Morvélo

Brighton based manufacturer Morvélo was launched in 2009 by Oli Pepper and David Marcar. After producing an initial line of T-shirts and some cycling kit they could sell to friends and family, Pepper and Marcar left their design consultancy to focus

“British bike apparel firms are not limited to the high-end market”

on producing kit that can be worn for all types of cycling, from BMX to road. The company is independent, self-financed and rider-owned, and occupies areas of the sport that are more inclusive than the high-end players.

“Our approach is to represent all forms of cycling in an accessible and passionate way, which is in intentional contrast to Rapha’s,” says Pepper.

Morvélo’s men’s and women’s road jerseys are priced at £70, whilst bibshorts cost £90. The range is slick and stylish, with retro and European influences heavily visible across the range.

One true indication that the profile of British manufacturers of cycle clothing has been on the

rise in recent years is that growth has not been exclusive to those occupying the higher price points. Middle ground companies such as Morvélo, with different business models, have seen sales increase both at home and abroad.

“Our growth is more gradual than investor-led companies,” says Pepper, “which seems more commonplace in the industry nowadays. Our turnover still has doubled year on year, with much of this growth being driven by overseas markets such as Australia, South Korea and Singapore.

“I think we have more in common with the new world of cycling, such as America and Australia and their bolder, more unrestrained approach... We can either choose to pick up on cycling tradition, decide to discard it or mix it up all together.”

The success of Morvélo, Rapha, Vulpine and their competitors is one that is largely dependent upon their ability to reach their customers online, as this is where the majority of cycling apparel

is purchased in Britain. With the exception of Rapha, none of these companies as yet has the brand strength or customer base to open physical locations. Intelligent online retail is paramount to sales and when it comes to British cycling retailers there has been no greater exponent of this than Wiggle.

The wonder of Wiggle

Since launching back in 1999 Wiggle has grown to become the UK's largest and most visible 'e-tailer' for cycling, swimming, running and triathlon products. Its growth, while steady, was unspectacular until 2006, when significant investment coincided with Britain's burgeoning interest in cycling and endurance events. In the five years that followed the company's turnover increased eight-fold to £87m in 2010/11.

As with Morvelo, success in overseas markets has been largely responsible for Wiggle's rapid growth. In 2008 just 2.5 per cent of total sales came from outside Britain. By 2011 this figure had reached 53.8 per cent. Since then the company has continued to see double-digit growth in international markets and now exports to over 70 countries.

One of the reasons for Wiggle's success has been its in-house value brand — dhb. Christina Lindquist, the brand marketing manager says: "While Wiggle doesn't consciously promote dhb over other brands, with one in three purchases of apparel being dhb it is clear we are doing something right."

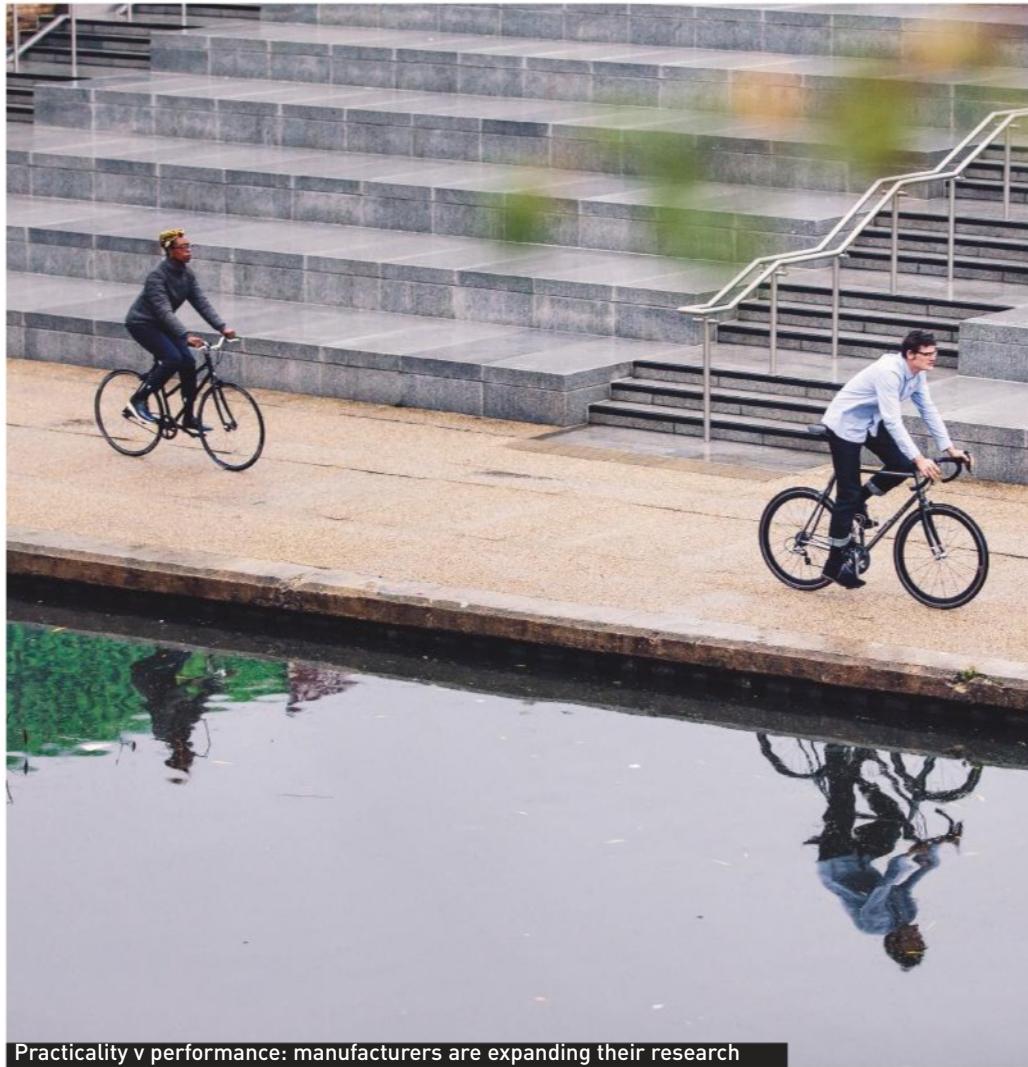
The success of the line has not been limited to the UK. Sales of dhb clothing have risen on the back of a perception of British clothing design and manufacture being synonymous with excellence.

"Typically British designed brands stand for style and quality" says Lindquist, "and this translates well into overseas markets where the 'Savile Row' mentality precedes any new brand, meaning that the focus on design and quality must remain high for the customers."

The quality of dhb clothing given its price point is undeniable. The majority of the road cycling range is produced in Italy using Italian fabrics, with some of the wider range manufactured in Asia.

Wiggle is able to keep the quality high and price low on dhb clothing by being both manufacturer and distributor, says Lindquist.

"By supplying our customers



Practicality v performance: manufacturers are expanding their research

"Being manufacturer and distributor, Wiggle can keep prices low"

direct, we cut out the need for a middle man and can pass on the saved costs to the customer so that they benefit in value."

Wiggle is not the only example of a small British bike shop turned large-scale distributor. Madison, which began life in 1977 as a small shop in north-west London, now proudly claims to be "the UK's largest distributor of bicycle parts and accessories". In recent years the company has expanded its offering to include snow and motor sports, electronics, and other equipment covering a host of outdoor activities. It also offers an in-house clothing brand — 'Madison: Cycle Everywear'

— which benefits from a similar manufacture and distribution model to that of dhb. The company has been highly visible in the professional ranks over the past two years since it joined with Genesis bikes as title sponsors of the Madison-Genesis team.

While much of the production of cycle-wear by British clothing companies is outsourced to Europe and Asia, Livingston-based Endura is an example of a company that has invested in homegrown manufacturing.

Established in 1992 by Jim McFarlane in the West Lothian town near Edinburgh, the company has increased its in-house manufacturing of technical cycle clothing year on year. By offering a huge range across all bike disciplines, Endura has grown to become the single largest cycle clothing brand in the UK with distributors across the globe. By offering decent clothing at a reasonable price the brand has become ubiquitous at all



levels of road cycling, and it is likely that most remember owning a piece of Endura clothing at some point.

If further indication of the strength of the bike-wear industry in Britain were needed, the fact that high street and designer manufacturers have begun to pick up on the rising profile of cycling as a representation of urban fashion, is a telling one. For those that commute by bike but are put off by the idea of bib-shorts, or would rather not have to change, versatile modifications to everyday clothes have been incorporated into collections from high street giants such as Levi's and H&M.

High street stalwarts

British designer Ted Baker is the latest well-known name to enter this market. Its collection, Raising The Handlebars, consists of jeans, shirts, blazers and jackets that have been adapted for comfort and versatility in the saddle. The

RECOMBINANT RIDERS

'The High Street Players'

Levi's: The legendary jeans manufacturer was one of the first major clothing brands to jump on the cycle-wear bandwagon. Now in the fifth season of its Commuter collection, Levi's has found success through smart innovations to otherwise simple, everyday clothing. One common feature on the jeans and trousers is the fabric loop above the back pocket, perfectly fitting a mini Kryptonite lock. The line seems aimed mostly at the "fixie" crowd, and there's little to speak of when it comes to the women's range.

H&M: The world's second-largest clothing retailer has had surprisingly little involvement in cycling until recently. Its first foray into the market in 2013 was a tentative one, launching only a small collection in collaboration with London store Brick Lane Bikes. Like Levi's, the collection is men only and forms part of H&M's Conscious collection, a range centred around sustainable and ethical clothing manufacture.

Ted Baker: Launched this year, exclusively through Wiggle, Ted Baker's Raising The Handlebars collection is an all-men's autumn-winter range aimed at the casual commuter, particularly those who would rather not have to change

use of elastane to provide greater stretch, arm-pit ventilation holes and reflective undersides to collars and cuffs are just some of the subtle adaptations that have been made to their clothing.

Ted Baker's focus appears to be on the cyclist who is either not so fond of Lycra, or would rather not have to change clothes on reaching their destination.

"There has been a huge increase in the popularity of cycling with the rise of Cavendish, Wiggins and Froome and people are realising that it's easier to cycle the mile or two to work or to head down to the shops, but they want clothes that they don't need to change out of or have to shower," says a company spokesman.

The pattern of success that emerges suggests that while the popularity of the sport in Britain has been rising steadily for some time, the choice for what we wear on the bike was initially a little slow to catch up. Now, the changes are not limited simply to greater choice between brands. The apparel side of the industry, largely stagnant when

at the office. The clothing ranges from polo shirts to jackets and blazers, all made bike-friendly through subtle use of elastane for extra stretch and the inclusion of reflective undersides and ventilation holes. Wiggle claims that the new range "will help bring cycling to a wider audience and remove reasons that prevent people making the switch to two wheels".



Ted Baker: a touch of commuting class

it came to performance clothing from the mid-Nineties to around 2004/5, has benefited from a technological renaissance over the past decade.

Recent design innovations within cycling can be seen from the creation of lightweight, aerodynamic fabrics and skinsuits for those that ride regularly, to the ever-expanding array of comfort clothing and city wear aimed at the recreational cyclist or commuter. To state that British manufacturers have now caught up with and even overtaken the traditional European powerhouses in the production of professional performance clothing no longer sounds outlandish.

In a time when the financial security of the sport at its highest levels is in doubt, the success of British cycle-wear manufacturers to capitalise on the continued and increasing popularity of the sport at home and abroad has given new life and a promising future to an industry that 10 years ago appeared to be going nowhere.

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CW INVESTIGATES

Undercover bike fit

NOT ALL BIKE fits are equal, but which results in the best set-up? CW's mystery shopper submits himself to the expertise of four different fitters

Maybe you should get a bike fit." It's an increasingly common response to questions as varied as, "Why is my knee hurting?" and "How can I get faster?" A good deal of bike fit theory is underpinned by the science of cycling biomechanics, while the systems used to relate the findings to speed and comfort on a bike are growing ever more sophisticated.

The big brands are weighing into the area with proprietary systems — Trek and Specialized offer services, while Shimano is close to launching its own highly advanced system. Specialists like Retul have their own take on the process, and innovative services like bike-fit-at-home are springing up alongside the traditional ones offered by local bike shops, where fitters are more likely to rely on experience, observation and a plumb line than spangly software.

It is very easy to spend £200 or more on a bike fit, although some are cheaper. It can take up to three hours and, in some cases, replacing certain components may be recommended, which may further increase the cost. So — what do you get for your money?

Cycling Weekly decided to send our man Mr X for four bike fits. He took advantage of the full range of services on offer, from the mobile one-man band bike fit, to two of the biggest names in the industry, to a self-confessed maverick. Here's what he found out.

UNDERCOVER BIKE FITTESTER

Who is Mr X the mystery shopper?

We have taken extreme care to keep our mystery shopper anonymous. The rider in the pictures is Ryan Ellis, who is not the mystery shopper or the author of this piece — the writer's name remains undisclosed.

However, we can reveal Mr X is an experienced road cyclist with a weekly mileage of 175-plus. He takes part in competitive riding in groups, fast chaingangs, occasional crit racing, and has realistic ambitions to get gold times in hilly sportives. He took his own bike to each bike fit and made it clear he was looking for help with finessing a position rather than starting from scratch.

He told the fitters that he had a bike fit previously (more than seven years ago), which formed the basis for his current position.

While he wasn't deliberately difficult, he asked tough questions and challenged the fitters, drawing on his good working knowledge of the area. Mr X reported existing lower back pain, unrelated to bike position, occasional right hand numbness and cramping feet, especially after very long, hard rides.

Rather naughtily, we slipped a 'deliberate mistake' into his bike, skewing the saddle very slightly off from the centre line of the top tube — would it be spotted? At the risk of seeming precious, Mr X also made it clear that aesthetics mattered to him and would not be well-disposed towards ideas such as a 17-degree upturned stem.

After getting the fit undercover, we made contact again, identified ourselves, and asked for a response to specific issues raised in the fitting.

The mobile man

For convenience, this service takes some beating. Arrange an appointment with 'The Bike Fitter' Philip Cocking and he visits your home. Cocking was happy to look at two bikes, unlike some other services that charge extra. At present, the Bike Fitter only covers Yorkshire but mobile services are becoming more popular all over the country.

Cocking kicked off the session with a questionnaire, but he was happier talking in detail about cycling history and specific problems than filling in endless details on a pro-forma piece of software. He is a cyclist and revealed that he became interested in bike fitting after having multiple unsuccessful fits to try to solve a persistent foot problem. The Serotta system fixed it and he was convinced.

Cocking revealed he was a fitter for Team Raleigh and that he had been to the US to train in the Serotta way. Serotta was a pioneer in bike fit, for which it's generally regarded as having an excellent reputation.



Who is he? The Bike Fitter, Philip Cocking

Tel: 07980 500100

www.thebikefitter.co.uk

What system? Serotta

International Cycling Institute

How much? £100 charged, but

this is listed on the website as a

time-limited offer; the usual

price is £150

Where? In Leeds, but

available throughout Yorkshire

All the gear? Cocking's box

of tricks included measuring

and tweaking implements,

insoles and a device for

adjusting stem length and tilt.

No video. No full size jig

Follow-up? A free return

visit was offered to assess

progress or fix problems



Time is taken to assess current position

The fit started in earnest with some basic flexibility tests, like toe-touching and hip flexor assessment, along with measurements of hamstring flexibility. In my case, the results were all well within the normal range, so there were no immediate problems that would affect the rest of the fit.

Cocking spent time on detailed foot measurements. This may be partly the result of his personal history, but as feet are a critical contact point, and as foot orthotics (see glossary) are a growing part of bike fitting, it seemed to be time well spent. My foot was measured weighted and un-weighted, and Cocking explained, convincingly, that the foot changes shape when power is put through it pedalling, so it's a crucial metric to understand.

The fit moved to the turbo, and I noted approvingly that Cocking fitted turbo skewers rather than



Bike fitting in the comfort of your own home

Right to reply...

Cocking said: "The convenience of getting fitted at home appeals to a lot of people. They feel relaxed in their own environment, and if they have more than one bike, it's obviously a lot easier for them."

"I might have a bit of a foot obsession, but I do believe it's an incredibly important contact point on the bike. I try not to be too dogmatic with my fits, and I will listen to a rider's preferences and try to work with that."

"But I will definitely let people know if I think their preferences are increasing the risk of injury, and I do think stretching, as well as strengthening exercises, off the bike are a vital part of being comfortable on the bike."

risking damaging the quick-releases on my bike.

A good amount of time was allowed for warming up — a plus point. Some fits begin after just a few pedal strokes; it seems sensible to allow the rider to settle into a relaxed natural riding rhythm. Cocking quickly noticed my right knee was collapsing in toward the top tube. He asked me to dismount and noted the deliberate mistake we had engineered on the bike — the saddle was slightly twisted.

Sorting the saddle

After a check of saddle height, using a measurement of my knee angle, Cocking said he was satisfied that, while the saddle twist needed correcting, my poor right knee tracking was more likely due to a specific muscle weakness (probably in the medial glutes) than a badly set up bike. The saddle height was fine.

After observing me on the bike, Cocking decided that my lower back problem was almost certainly not related to my position, and the verdict here was for me to obtain advice from a chiropractor or physiotherapist.

The next problem area to be considered was my foot



cramping and pain. Based on his earlier measurements, Cocking strongly recommended the use of footbeds. He is an agent for a specialist footbed company, but to his great credit, he did not in any sense give these the hard sell. In fact, he strongly steered me away from committing to spend £60-plus on them, and suggested buying a cheaper set of footbeds from Specialized — that can be used in any shoes — and trying them out. Cocking did not have these in stock, proving that his recommendation was unsullied by any interest he had in making a sale. Impressive.

Next up was reach and drop, specifically with a view to tackling my intermittent right hand numbness. Considerable time was spent in this area, with a full discussion of the options.

Cocking said the existing fit was very close to optimal, with the option of using a 100mm stem instead of the 110mm fitted. This conclusion was reached after a series of adjustments on a jig fitted to the bike, which allowed stem length and height to be adjusted quickly and tried out.

Again, a higher hand position was considered but, as Cocking said, "I like to work with the rider" — and he was sympathetic to the suggestion that a +17 degree system was not to my taste aesthetically. He suggested that the numbness could be solved with a shorter stem and by flipping the existing six-degree stem from negative to positive.

The three-hour session closed with a demonstration of exercises to strengthen the glute medius and some sound general advice on stretching and strengthening.

Conclusion

Excellent value for money from a knowledgeable fitter who took his job seriously, listened attentively, and did not embark on a hard sell mission. Cocking delivered excellent advice in a friendly manner alongside free follow-up. It lacked motion tracking bells and video whistles, but it was a very sound fit at a very good price — and super convenient.

If I had one criticism, and it is a mild one, not a great deal of attention was paid to cleat positioning, which can be a very important factor.

The big S

As you might expect from Specialized, the approach was corporate and professional. I was shown to a dedicated area, closed off from the rest of the store, which was clean, comfortable and cool.

The process began with a detailed questionnaire alongside some informal chat about cycling style and goals. The fitter Ben Reynard was friendly seemed to listen to what I had to say, tailoring his approach accordingly. The fit moved on to a series of flexibility and range of movement tests, each accurately measured. Key muscles, such as hip flexors, quads and IT band, were assessed and rated for tightness.

At Specialized HQ, new fitters are put through a week-long training course, Reynard explained. Tests are taken, and some candidates fail. After the initial training, fitters must carry out a number of 'free fits' in the store. These are offered to customers who have just bought, or were on the point of buying a bike, as an added extra. The fitter is then reassessed by Specialized



Who is he? Ben Reynard, store manager and fit technician at Specialized Concept Store in Harrogate

What system? Specialized Body Geometry Fit

How much? £200 for the top of the range

Where? In Harrogate, but also available in Specialized Concept stores in Birmingham, Bristol, Chelmsford, Chester, London, Newbury, Nottingham, Plymouth and more than 40 other centres

All the gear? Less than you might think. Video capture and lots of measurement gizmos, but no jigs for quick tries of positions and tweaks

Follow up? Free follow-up with a trainee fitter

and must pass in order to become a fully-fledged bike fitter.

After the flexibility tests, Reynard spent a considerable amount of time on foot measurement. Unlike with The Bike Fitter, the Body Geometry system does not measure the foot weighted. When challenged about this, Reynard said that cycling is carried out seated, so a weighted measurement would not provide useful information.

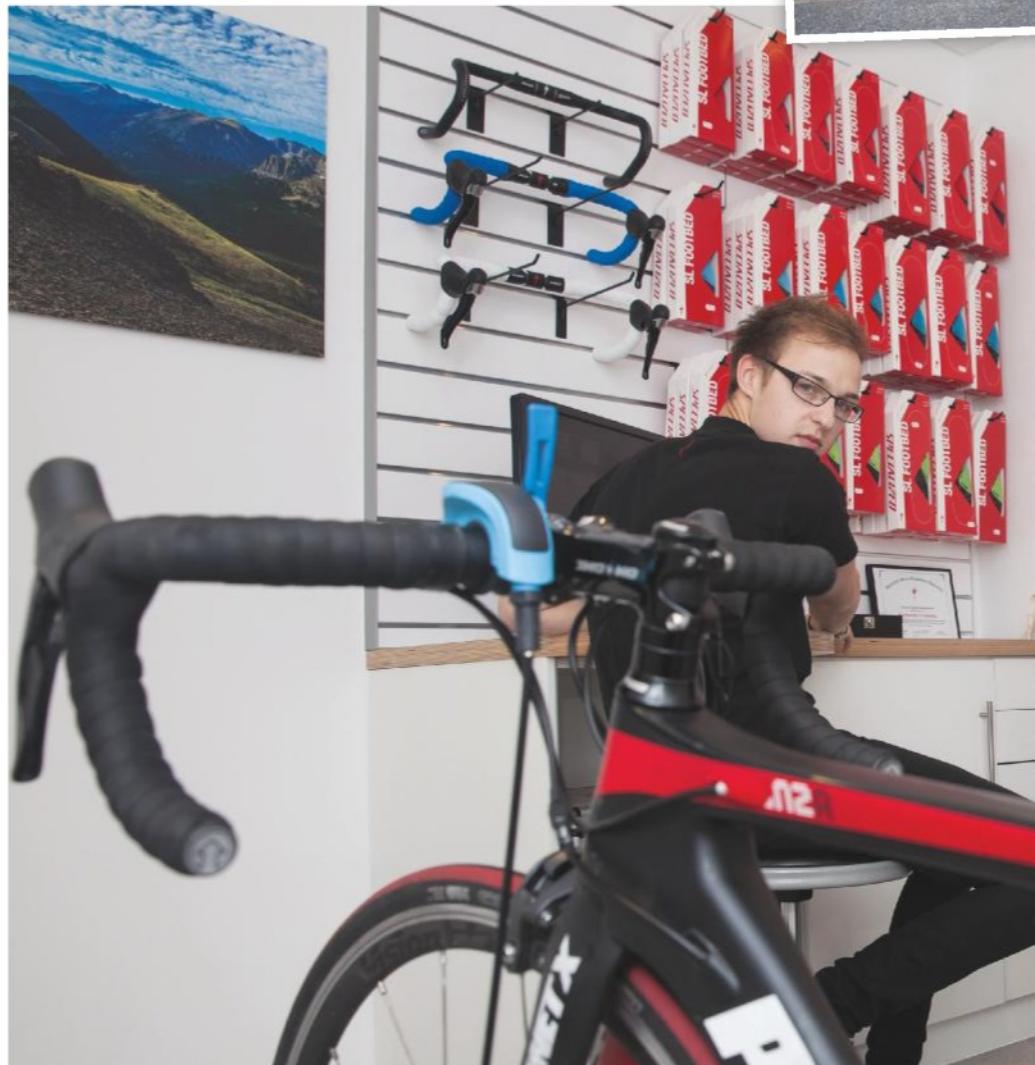
Next came cleat alignment and positioning on two sets of shoes. Reynard used a plumb line to get an exact cleat position — described as "new normal", with the first metatarsal joint slightly

ahead of the pedal spindle (see KOPS in the glossary).

The hard sell

Reynard recommended using footbeds. He clearly spelled out the reasons and the potential benefits, including as a potential solution to the foot cramping I experience. I felt very strongly steered to purchase these as an additional extra. Was it a hard sell? On balance, yes, it probably was — though I could have said no to the additional £23.

My bike was fitted to a turbo (using shop QR skewers) and the video filming began. One mild criticism here: there was almost



Right to reply...

Store manager Dave Quinn said: "Ben may have missed the deliberate mistake at first because he was probably observing and measuring the bike as a reference point, before moving anything. There is science and methodology within our Body Geometry Fit protocol that makes our stance on fitting unique and powerful. It's a holistic system and its strength is a sum of its parts."



no time allowed for warm-up and loosening the legs, which might have been beneficial.

Reynard also identified that my right knee was collapsing inward; like The Bike Fitter, he suspected a weakness in the gluteus medius — corroborated with a single-leg squat test. He suggested this weakness could be contributing towards the lower back pain I experience.

He also identified another problem quickly — using the software, in conjunction with the measurements taken, he diagnosed an overly aggressive “toe-down” pedalling action. The seatpost was lowered 8mm, the video capture was run again, and Reynard showed me the difference in the numbers, which revealed that the reduced angle at my ankle was now much more in the range of the body geometry system’s recommendations.

In lowering the seatpost, Reynard corrected the deliberate mistake we had made to the bike. It had not been spotted prior to this, but was now fixed.

Reach and drop were examined next — with time and care taken. Observation of position and cross-referencing to previous measurements concluded that no significant changes were needed, except shuffling the saddle forward a fraction. He recommended that padded gloves may help with my right hand numbness.

The new bike set-up was applied to both bikes there and then, and all the adjustments were made by Reynard. There was no additional charge for the extra bike.

Conclusion

This was a thorough, knowledgeable and careful bike fit. Reynard had excellent customer service skills and fully engaged with me. He delivered explanations patiently and made reference to the measurements — this process was greatly helped by having the video capture as a reference.

The fit offered clues as to the source of my lower back pain and a potential solution to cramping feet. However, I felt that the right hand numbness was perhaps unlikely to be solved with padded gloves.

Retul – it's all about numbers

The test was conducted in a bike shop on a mezzanine floor in full view, which may not suit everybody. It was a trifle warm for hammering the turbo, but a fan had been set up.

Of all the four fits, this one was probably the least 'chatty'. Andrew Sedgwick who conducted the fit asked basic questions about the type of riding, with a short questionnaire. However, in comparison with the other fits, few supplementary questions were asked. More questions might have revealed more detail about what was required.

The Retul system was not explained in detail at any point. I found this a little surprising, as it's a sophisticated and interesting system; customers may benefit from at least a brief overview of how it works.

The session continued with movement and flexibility tests, which were thorough, though feedback on the findings was not as extensive as in the other



Who is he? Andrew Sedgwick, at Bike Science North East

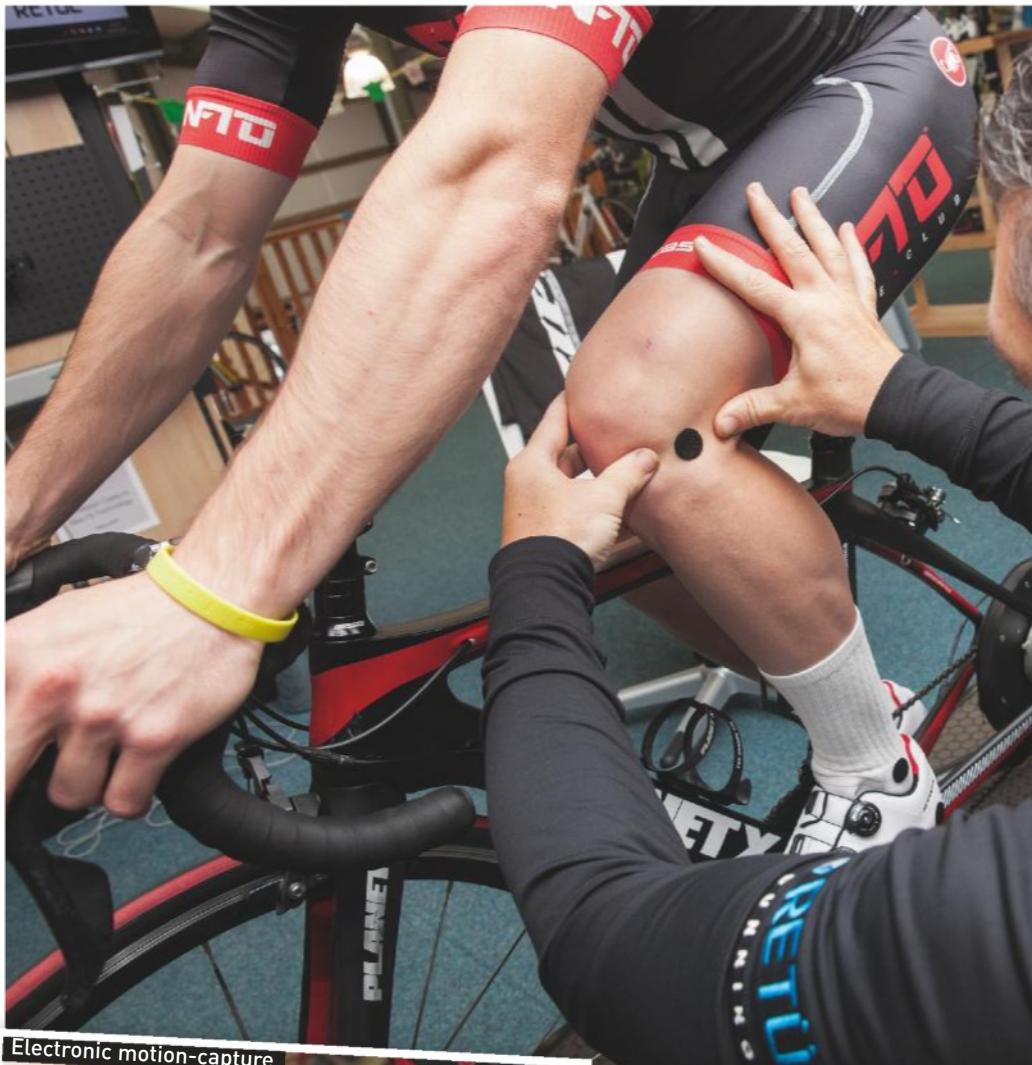
What system? Retul

How much? £149.99 (Level 2 off-peak) £184.99 (Level 2 Saturdays). Extra for second bike

Where: Just outside Darlington. Bike Science also runs operations in Bristol, Billericay, Derby, London and Tunbridge Wells. Retul fits can also be found at many other locations. www.bike-science.com

All the gear? Yep. Full motion capture and jig for tweaks plus still photography

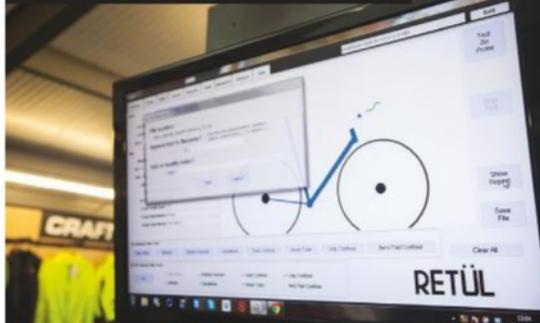
Follow up? Not formally offered



Electronic motion-capture



Retul crunches the wealth of numbers



fits. This is not to suggest that the tests were less useful, but I didn't feel fully talked through the results.

The findings were not substantially different from those of the previous tests, though I was advised to strengthen core muscles to address my back pain and right-hand numbness.

The next section of the fit distinguishes Retul from the other systems. Sedgwick carefully placed sticky tabs on my feet, ankles, knees, hips, elbows and shoulders. A long sensor band was attached to the tabs, and the Retul machine uses LED technology to capture the pedalling motion and riding position in fine detail. It's an awesomely powerful tool.

The machine spat out a huge selection of metrics, categorised into fit angles, fit alignment, fit movement, anthropometrics and marker path. The first three are related to angles and position, while the latter two are body and



Right to reply...

Bike Science's head fitter Andy Sexton said: "We encourage all fitters to communicate to the best of their ability and to remember that for each customer the fit is an important and expensive day out, and should be treated as a special occasion. We're always glad of feedback, and we will pass it on."

"On pricing, we actually brought the midweek price down in order to encourage people to come at the off-peak time, as we were getting so booked up at the weekends."

BODY OF INTELLIGENCE

Bike fit versus physio

Very occasionally, a really proficient bike fit may throw up a physiological problem that cannot be solved by tweaking position on the bike.

If this happens, it's probably very wise to get some further advice. A GP with some interest in, and enthusiasm for, sports injuries can be a good first port of call. That may well be followed up with physiotherapy — preferably from a specialist sports physiotherapist.

Bike fits are becoming so sophisticated now that they can be a shortcut to diagnosing a problem inherent in biomechanics, rather than in the riding position. A good fitter will see the difference between the two and suggest getting further specific advice.

Bike Science has a homely feel



Minor stem tweak



Hamstrings assessed

knee tracking measurements. Each category has several measurements. After the fit, a report was emailed to me with helpful pictograms illustrating each of the metrics.

Judgement time

Sedgwick's analysis chimed with previous diagnoses of my position. I was a fraction stretched out, with a slightly overlong stem and positioned a little low down. My seat height was good, but saddle fore and aft needed a tweak.

Adjustments were carried out there and then, carefully and precisely. A shorter stem was fitted, a headset spacer added, bars rotated slightly and saddle tweaked. The deliberate mistake was spotted, though only once prompted by me.

Post-adjustments, the position was reviewed. Sedgwick pointed out the key measurements that had concerned him, drawing my attention to improved angles in important areas.

Again, the precision and power of this system for analysing position was impressive — a few small tweaks showed big, visible and measurable differences.

Sedgwick used an electronic probe to capture the now ideal, Retul-approved bike set-up. It's an extraordinarily precise tool — no crouching and semi-guesswork

with a tape measure here. The measurements are on the report, with diagrams.

Exact reproduction on a second bike would be a two-man job requiring a spirit level, a tape measure and a good deal of patience. But the payoff is greater accuracy and precision. My bike was refitted with its old stem. There was no hard sell, and Sedgwick concluded, "Let me know how you get on", rather than offering a formal follow-up.

Conclusion

Easily the most precise and powerful fit of the four, the Retul system takes accuracy and measurement to a new level. I felt that the fitter's approach was professional and thorough, but perhaps just lacked a little interpersonal warmth. Sedgwick did not engage as fully as did the other fitters.

The pricing model of Bike Science is a little odd too. Though £149.99 is a fair price for a powerful system, charging a higher price for a Saturday fitting may seem unfair to some. Similarly, an additional charge for a second bike is something potential customers may want to consider carefully.

Trust in me

This was the only one of the four fits where the fitter took time to observe me riding a bike on the road as well as on the turbo. This is how Tim Williams, who conducted the fit, started the session, at premises on the outskirts of Cambridge. It was a different introduction to a bike fit, and the rest of the session would prove to be highly individual and distinct from the others.

Williams is a coach, a former first-cat racer and an inveterate tinkerer of his own bike position. He's spent a lifetime searching for the perfect pedals, the ideal handlebars and the just-right seatpost. Williams is the sort of bloke who hoards examples of the components he likes, just in case their production is ceased.

He has used his experience and deep study of bike fitting and biomechanics to develop his own model of bike fitting. His philosophy is expounded at length on his website.

Williams explains that his process is all about removing tension and finding a relaxed position on the bike. He believes that an unstressed, comfortable position enables more useful muscles to be engaged, and that translates to more power, speed and greater endurance.

'Relaxed and comfortable' does not translate to a sit-up-and-beg posture; Williams shifts my cleats back as far as they will go towards the heel of the shoe.

He does not bother with



Who is he? Tim Williams, coach and bike fitter at Perfect Condition

www.perfectcondition.ltd.uk

What system? Tim's own

How much? £80

Where? Cambridge

All the gear? Various jigs and measuring tools. Very few used

Follow up? Not offered

flexibility or range of movement measurements, and later confides that he "doesn't believe in all this angle stuff".

Williams observes the new foot position and explains that some of his method is based on an improved pedalling technique. He demonstrates it for me on a video and admits that for many riders this will necessitate "re-learning how to pedal".

When this technique is done correctly, as on the video, the pedal stroke looks beautifully smooth — with lots of souplesse

— but the movement is not immediately easy to master.

Set-back post

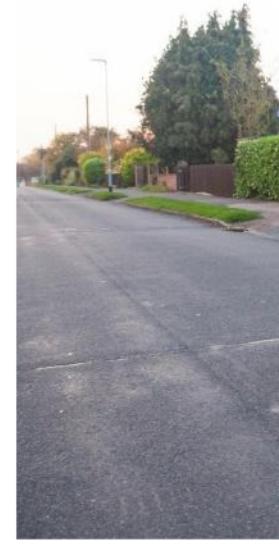
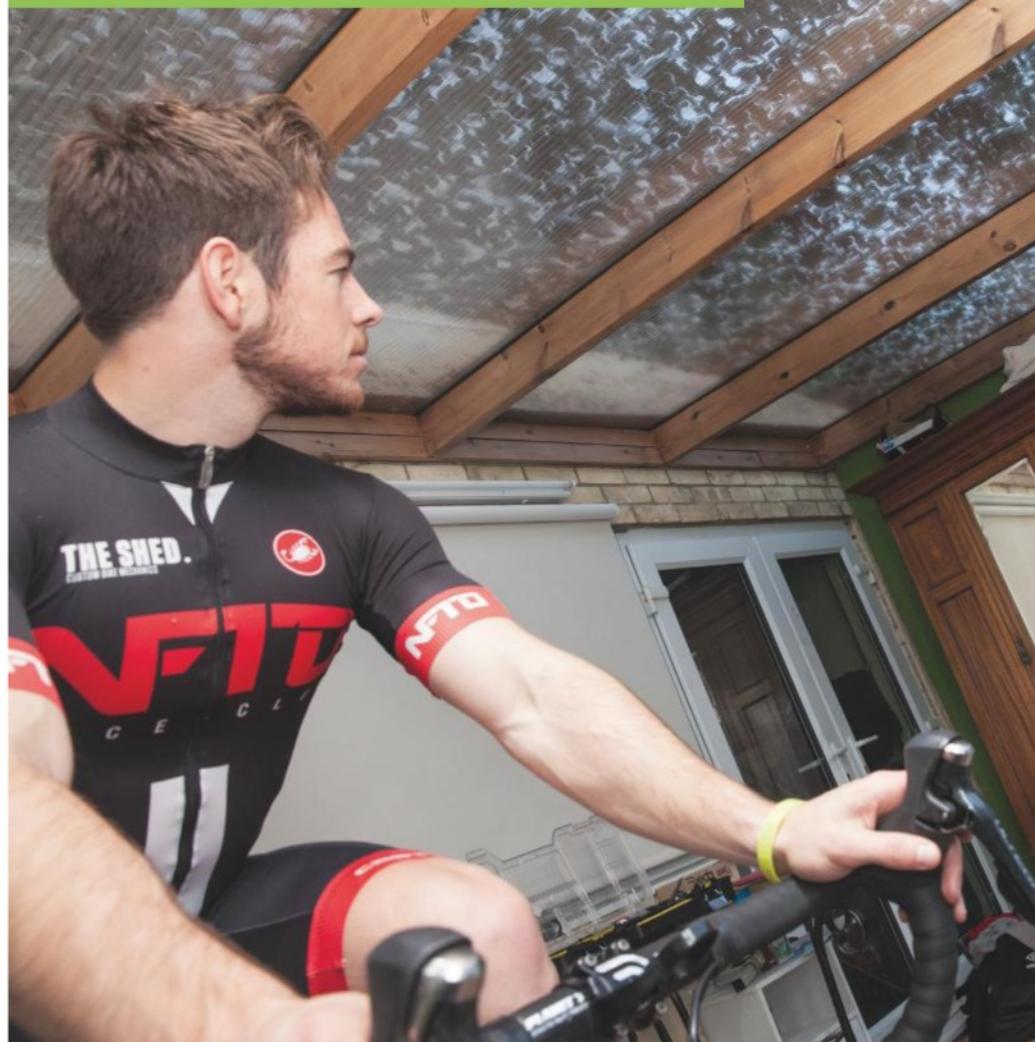
Next, Williams removes my seatpost, confessing with a smile that he "hates in-line seatposts", and replaces it with a 25mm set-back post. The seatpost was lowered by 10, 15 and eventually 20mm. He didn't spot the deliberate mistake, but carefully observed the effect of each shift. I felt low and almost cramped on the bike — unsurprising with such big changes.

Right to reply...

Williams said: "I believe most people feel better if they are far enough behind the bottom bracket that they are not pushing off the nose of the saddle, which tends to emphasise the use of the quads too much. My model can lead to what seems like extremes of adjustment, but I think it works."

"Bikes feel fast if you are thrown forward on to the pedals. I think they are being designed that way these days, and I think it's wrong."

"This is my model. I have spent a long time developing it. But I am not very good at blowing my own trumpet, so nearly all my business is word of mouth."



First up: an outdoor position assessment



Focusing on seat position



Saddle set-back prioritised



However, the un-weighting on the handlebars was immediately apparent. I felt more rooted on the bike and a good deal less pressure through my arms and shoulders — and, yes, more relaxed. But I have a markedly different hip angle, and one I suspect would set off red warning lights and klaxons at Retul or Specialized HQ.

Next, Williams addressed reach to the bars. He flipped my existing stem to positive and rotated the bars anti-clockwise. Back on, I felt crouched as low as Mark Cavendish hiding in a sprint train. Reach to the bars was no longer a stretch, yet the stem length was unchanged.

The drops were supremely comfortable. Williams aims to

Conclusion

This was an idiosyncratic fit from a lifelong cyclist, coach and experienced bike fitter. It was thoughtful and unhurried. Williams engaged with me fully, but the fit involved wholesale changes to my position and pedalling technique — and it thus requires a belief in Williams's philosophy.

I have no reason to believe that the position would fail to achieve its stated aim of producing a more relaxed position that increases comfort on the drops and makes more effective use of hamstrings and glutes.

The radical change may divide opinion. Nonetheless, it was a fascinating experience, the cheapest of the four and a great service from an original thinker who is not at all afraid to depart from conventional wisdom and go his own way.

make riding in the drops — in comfort — the default position.

But the change to my position is radical. I am lower in the saddle, much farther back and more crouched. Williams said that that was exactly his intention.

The fit, which took two hours, concluded with Williams recording the new position minutely, using an X-Y tool and writing the coordinates on a pre-printed diagram on a sheet of paper, before resetting my bike to its previous state.

Shimano's system

Shimano is promising to introduce a system later this year which may turn out to be the most sophisticated bike fit system on the planet — and it'll be available in bike shops up and down the country.

It promises full motion-capture, as well as a kind of scanner that captures your current bike and transfers it in virtual form to a jig, where oodles of tweaks can be experimented with at the click of a mouse or a tweak of a bolt.

It incorporates sophisticated power-measuring tools, so new positions can be tried to assess the impact on output. There are software algorithms for analysing pedalling techniques and forces acting on the crank. Rumour has it that some pro cyclists are achieving double-digit percentage increases in pedalling efficiency after submitting to the machine. Shimano says the system is "brand neutral", which means recommendations for new components to improve efficiency are not limited to Shimano parts.

Local bike shops are being asked to pay upwards of £5,000 for the kit, and fitters will be intensively trained. It's big money, but bike fit is one area where shops can score heavily over internet operations.

Mr X will be sampling Shimano's wizardry and reporting back as soon as the system becomes available.

Final thoughts...

The serious cyclist may well spend 600-800 hours a year in the saddle, so it's vital to be comfortable. Therefore, a bike fit is, in *CW*'s view, money well spent. It can increase power, improve endurance and help to diagnose and fix niggles and problems.

The choice of bike fits available has never been greater, and the market will expand further with a really serious new player in the next few weeks.

Each of the fits Mr X experienced had strengths, none had really serious weaknesses and all were reporting healthy levels of bookings, suggesting that the nation's cyclists have been converted to the benefit of a bike fit.

It is impossible to recommend one of the fits over the rest — but this may help you decide which is best for you.

- The Bike Fitter's at-home service is excellent for convenience, multiple bikes and a solid all-round good fit at a very attractive price, if you choose the £100 deal.
- Specialized's service is the most expensive, but includes good follow-up and covers almost every measurement you would need.
- The Retul fit would suit the data-hungry, with its emphasis on powerful, precise numbers. It was the fit that delivered true motion capture the best.

- Perfect Condition's fit is for the free thinker who's willing to take a bet on Tim Williams's huge experience. It's also very good value for money.
- If you are having a fit because of an existing injury, we'd recommend finding a fitter who works in conjunction with a physio and/or has knowledge of sports injury.



Bike fit glossary

There are a number of terms that will crop up in any bike fit. Before spending the cash, it's a good idea to get a grip of some of the less familiar ones. This will help you understand the process and the findings. These are some of the more unusual ones to look out for — beyond the well understood terms like reach or drop.

Biomechanics: Your measurements as determined by your muscles and skeleton. Many of the most useful are angles. Knee angle maximum (with leg fully extended, pedal at six o'clock) or knee angle minimum (the same pedal at

12 o'clock) can be used to set saddle height.

Foot orthotics: Orthotics are custom inserts that take account of variances in the shape of the foot to solve problems like pain or discomfort, or place the foot in what's considered to be the ideal position for pedalling.

Varus and valgus: Terms to describe whether the ball of the foot is canted to the inside (varus) or to the outside (valgus). Varus is by far the more common of the two. Some bike fits will seek to address this by using inserts or wedges.

Ischial tuberosity: A posh term for the sit bones. Some bike fits will measure

the sit bones to provide a recommended saddle width.

Knee tracking: Different systems use different methods to assess this, but they are all looking at the same thing. Does the knee move up and down in a straight line while pedalling? Any deviation from up and down through a vertical straight line can indicate problems with cleats, saddle height and other aspects of bike set-up — even muscular or physiological problems with the rider.

The KOPS rule: This is an acronym for knee over pedal spindle. There are various definitions of this. The basic and most common is that, if

a plumb line is dropped from the front of the kneecap, it should line up with the centre of the pedal spindle for a good position on the bike.

With the increasing sophistication of bike fits, the KOPS rule, long the subject of much debate, has become almost redundant. It's no longer considered as important as it once was.

The new neutral: This places the bony protuberance on the inside of the foot, at the base of the big toe, a little forward of the pedal spindle. Other fit systems prefer a 'neutral' position, where the protuberance is centred on the pedal spindle. Again, it remains a subject of debate.

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Aluminium comeback?

Carbon-fibre has been the frame material of choice for performance cycles for at least 10 years now — its potential for lightweight, aerodynamics and comfort seemingly unrivalled.

But with Specialized releasing its new alloy £7,500 S-Works Allez, carbon's reign looks set to be challenged. And the 'Big S' is not alone — other manufacturers are also looking at the benefits aluminium can offer to the high-end bike market.

The new Allez has attracted the attention of a number of domestic pro teams, and there will be plenty of sportivistes casting a keen eye over it too. Perhaps we could even see a resurgence of alloy in the Tour peloton? Watch this space...



Write to Tech

Either email us at cycling@timeinc.com or write to: *Cycling Weekly*, 9th floor, 233 High Street, Leon House, Croydon CR9 1HZ

New clothing from Condor

LONDON BRAND CONDOR has created a new range of clothing called 'Since 1948', designed to be worn day in, day out, without breaking the bank

The 'Since 1948' jersey and corresponding bibshorts are a similar design to those used by the Condor team in the 1960s, only updated with modern fabrics and stitching. Condor says this is ideal for the everyday cyclist. The fit is described as being "classic", suiting a number of body types, and comes complete with a rather nice cap.

Thankfully, while the kit retains its heritage, Condor has made sure it remains reasonably priced. The short-sleeved jersey retails at £44.99 and the shiny bibs at £59.99.

But if heritage kit is not your thing, Condor is introducing a 'Professional' range, too, which also features the 'Since 1948' insignia. These garments are designed to be more technical, with a closer, aerodynamic race fit.

The jersey sleeves are described as being ergonomic, with a 'high-stretch, low-volume' design for free movement. Flat-seam construction throughout the jersey and shorts promises to add comfort while looking tidy, finished with a microdot fabric around the sleeve and leg grippers to add visibility in dark conditions — a welcome alternative for commuters who don't enjoy dressing like a sherbet lemon in order to be seen.

In addition, there are reflective trims, a luminous zip and a useful water-resistant, zipped rear pocket. With the added features, the Professional range is more mid-table in terms of price, with the jersey retailing at £74.99 and matching bibs at £89.99.



www.condorcycles.com

Sneak peek at Condor's new race bike

Condor is set to have a bike shake-up at the end of 2014, with much of its range heading for an upgrade. The steel Fratello will include a disc brake option, complete with lighter tube set, while the carbon Squadra will be upgraded with an overall weight drop and increase in ride quality, according to the London-based brand.



The Leggero SL



Prototype carbon beauty

However, the most exciting news is the superlight Leggero SL race bike for 2015 — see our pictures for a sneak peek.



Lezyne Control Drive £21.99

Lezyne products are always well built and this Control Drive CO2 inflator is no exception. The head unit is a work of art and will no doubt stand being bashed around in any jersey pocket or saddle bag for years to come. The quality comes at a price compared with some basic units available but the Control Drive stands out among cheaper competition by offering the ability to control the rate of CO2 that enters the tyre. In theory it's a great way to top up a tyre mid ride on a slow puncture, or getting to a preferred psi and it saves discharging a whole canister. This is a great little item. CC

Contact www.upgradebikes.co.uk

8



Gamut Cillos Headset Spacers 5mm; 10mm

We like it when a company really puts thought into a component and with the Cillos headset spacer you get the feeling Gamut wants to improve function and save weight with each accessory. With claims of being the lightest spacer ever made we weren't convinced for the need, but for those weight weenies and hill climbers, these might be a good option. Two Gamut 5mm spacers (2g) weighed less than one regular 5mm carbon effect spacer (3g) and hugged the steerer tube tighter than the standard spacer. Prices are £4.99 for a 5mm, £5.99 for 10mm and £7.99 for a 20mm spacer. SL

Contact www.madison.co.uk

7



Stan's NoTubes Iron Cross Comp Wheelset £495

At 1,590g Stan's Iron Cross Comp disc wheelset is an easy weight saver over a set of entry level wheels supplied with most cyclocross disc equipped bikes.

However, the obvious reason to buy Stan's is for the tubeless compatibility. With the ability to run without inner tubes, there is potential to save at least an extra 200g. Weight saving is an obvious boon, but for off-road, the real benefit came in the form of very low tyre pressures — only 22psi for me, based on Stan's own

recommendations for a 62kg rider. The ride feedback and overall grip levels receive a dramatic increase, much closer to a tubular experience than anything with an inner tube can offer. The 32-spoke wheels are stiff enough for racing but don't offer too much unwanted feedback. More importantly, they have been reliable. The disc-specific hub remains the same through the range. Distributor Paligap only offers this Comp model; the best in the range. That's fine with us! CC

Contact www.paligap.cc

8

Giro Factor ACC £249.99

Finding shoes that fit me often seems to be a near-impossible undertaking. But the Factors fitted perfectly from the off and have continued to be comfortable for rides of up to five hours. They have excellent ventilation, which I would put down to the soft, almost rubbery, synthetic Eovfiber upper that moulds itself to the shape of your feet. The Supernatural footbed system also adds a degree of tailoring by way of swappable arch supports that easily attach using a Velcro strip. For riders with wide feet an HV (High Volume) version is also available, though only in black. Stiff soles are often the cause of foot pain but the Easton EC90 ACC soles feature replaceable heel bumpers and give nothing away in terms of stiffness and offer nothing back when it comes to numb toes and foot pain. Fastening is simple with strong Velcro straps and a neat, low-profile ratchet that's both easy to use and sits well under a Belgian bootie. Overall it's a great shoe: comfortable, stiff and, at under 252g for a size 43, just about justifies its price. RH

Contact www.zyro.co.uk

8





Specialized Shoe Cover £15

Specialized's Shoe Cover is a simple product that does what you'd expect for a £15 pair of oversocks. They're not quite your average shoe covers, though. The polypropylene material is much like a regular oversock, only thicker and tougher — a kind of overshoe and sock hybrid. So far they've resisted wear and tear around the sole far longer than a regular oversock and thanks to that extra thickness, warmth and overall shoe protection are improved too. To match up with the extra warmth provided, the length of the cuff is fairly substantial to prevent any coverage issues with your longs. CC

Contact www.specialized.com

8

Mavic Cosmic Ultimate Helmet £165



RECOMMENDED

The Plasma, Mavic's former top of the range road lid, looks quite chunky in comparison to this new slimmed-down model. The Cosmic Ultimate weighs in at only 210g (medium), a healthy 70g reduction. Those figures make it just about light enough to compete with the market leaders at this price range. The internal shape is neither particularly narrow nor wide and, thanks to four size options, getting our size right was simple enough. Inside, a summer of sweat and hard work were easily washed away thanks to the removable padding that has stood the test of time. The retention system, known as the Ergo Hold, is a lightweight plastic affair that held in place well and was easy to adjust mid-ride. And despite the minimal customisation to how high or low the cradle strap sits, it was always comfortable enough for this tester's head. CC

Contact www.mavic.com

9



POC Essential Bibshorts £175 Jersey £150



RECOMMENDED

POC's Essential line offers kit that performs and looks the part, too. The materials here all work exceptionally well, from the compressive shorts to the lightweight top, which offers great heat distribution in summer months. We loved the waist and leg grippers that really held on tight, as well as the stylish reflective panels on the rear. The cut of the jersey, with a tight front section, stays flat in the tuck position. At a combined price of £325 the collection falls at the expensive end of the market and buys you a level of exclusivity, but what you're really purchasing is kit that excels in on-bike performance. CC

Contact 2pure.co.uk



9

Bike test

No. 22 BICYCLE COMPANY Great Divide frameset

By Symon Lewis

Titanium remains a popular material from which to build plush road bikes, and it's the metal of choice for the Great Divide, from relatively new US-based brand No. 22 Bicycle Company. For anyone who isn't a chemistry geek, 22 is titanium's number in the periodic table. The firm began making bikes in 2012, and this is its latest.

Bryce Gracey and Mike Smith founded the No. 22 Bicycle Company with the goal of designing a frameset that brought out the best from titanium, but incorporated modern bike frame developments to ensure all-day-long comfort.

The small New York-based team's bikes are built by veteran craftsmen and the frames are distributed in the UK via VAM Performance. London's No. 22 dealer, Cycle Lab, will happily arrange for test rides and discuss build options before purchase — ensuring you get your ideal bike — with either mechanical or electronic groupset.

No. 22 currently builds two models, both available in the UK. Firstly, there's our test machine, a road frame called Great Divide; then there is the track alternative, named the Little Wing. The company says a new cyclo-cross bike is in the pipeline too, so keep your eyes on these pages for that.



Ti frame features bi-ovalised down tube

Costing £2,399.99 — fairly typical for a titanium road frame — the Great Divide is, on first look, a stunning frame. It is crafted from 3AI-2.5V titanium tubing with swaged chainstays and oversized 'bi-ovalised' down tubes to boost stiffness and responsiveness. A PressFit 30 bottom bracket and an oversized head tube follow current trends and allow the use of oversized bearings.

No. 22's road bike is in its element on long, steady rides





Reynolds 32 carbon clincher wheels



Understated silver and grey paintjob



Chainset features elliptical rings

Our set-up included the Shimano 6800 Ultegra 11-speed groupset, rolling on Reynolds 32 carbon clinchers, finished with lightweight Pro Vibe bars, stem, and seatpost. The overall package tipped the scales at 7.6kg, making it a pleasant climbing companion.

Smooth-rolling fun

Despite being made from titanium, the Great Divide has a chunky exterior and geometry that really does create a solid platform. Initial speed pick-up out of the saddle was a little slow, but that's expected from a titanium frame. It worked better at speed, feeling a little more agile and frisky when it needed to.

The geometry could never be described as aggressive, though; the head tube height is relatively normal, a concession to its intended 'all-day' steed credentials. It rewards positive rider inputs, which made it an engaging ride. We felt compelled to press on, especially on the descents, with good feedback keeping us informed as to the limits of grip and the frame's capabilities. However, the short wheelbase does make for irritating toe-overlap.

descents, with good feedback keeping us informed as to the limits of grip and the frame's capabilities. However, the short wheelbase does make for irritating toe-overlap.

"The Great Divide comes into its own when in the saddle"

The Great Divide comes into its own when in the saddle churning out a steady pace, either zipping along the flat or climbing while seated, getting into a good rhythm. In these situations, comfort was excellent, and the frame gave a sense of effortless riding, maybe helped by the Rotor 3d+ chainset with Q rings. Power transfer felt efficient, with minimum energy loss through flex and drag.

Road buzz is pretty much non-existent, but the shorter wheelbase and stiff carbon wheelset did mean that bumpy sections of road made the bike bang about a little.

All in all, we were happy with the comfort, and topped off with the lightweight properties, you're getting a great all-round road frame with plush titanium styling.

THE TRACK BIKE OPTION

Little Wing track frameset £2,399.99

Strange name aside, the Little Wing in its bare titanium colour is a great-looking track bike. Faithful to the ethos of track cycling, it's minimalist. Its large tubes, oversized head tube and integrated seatpost imply a stiff ride, which is needed on the track. No. 22 says that this frameset is great for both the velodrome and the road, hinting that it isn't an out-and-out track thoroughbred. That's perhaps a good thing; at £2,399.99 you'd want it to do a little more than be a bike solely for the boards.

NO. 22 GREAT DIVIDE

Contact	www.vamperformance.com
Price	£2,399.99 (frame only); £5,500 (build price)
Frame	3Al-2.5V titanium
Fork	Enve road 2.0 carbon
Size range	52, 54, 56, 58, 60cm
Weight	7.6kg complete
Groupset	Shimano Ultegra 6800
Crankset	Rotor 3d+ chainset with Q rings
Wheels	Reynolds 32 carbon clincher
Tyres	Vittoria Open Pavé CG
Bars	Pro Vibe
Stem	Pro Vibe
Seatpost	Pro Vibe
Saddle	Pro Falcon Carbon
Size tested	52cm
OVERALL RATING	

9

CONCLUSION

No. 22 Bicycle Company has done well. In a relatively short time, it has nailed frame design and set-up. Our build, fitted with quality, lightweight components, is the preferable way to go for this frameset. Given that you're making a sizeable investment in the frame, it pays to equip it with quality finishing kit. In the long run, you get a robust and plush frameset that should last a lifetime. We doubt this frame would work nearly as well with heavier components. Keeping weight low means faster acceleration and helps the frame's weaker points in terms of outright stiffness.

With the right components, the Great Divide could offer a lifetime of plush riding thanks to its comfortable and durable titanium construction.



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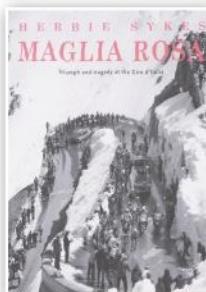
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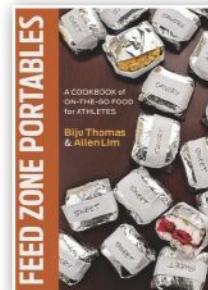


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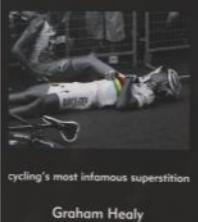


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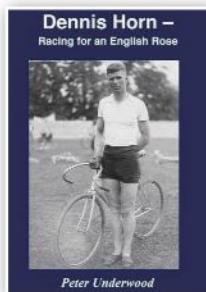
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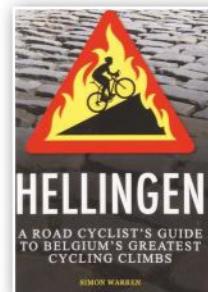
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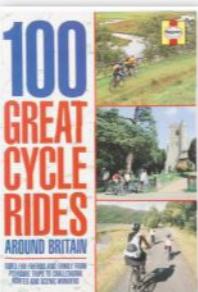
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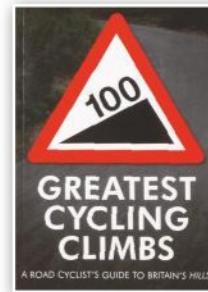
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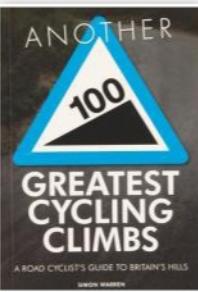
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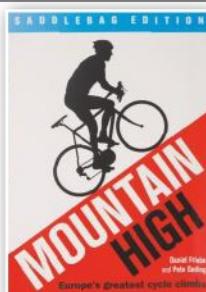
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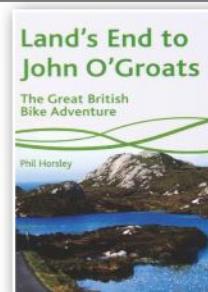
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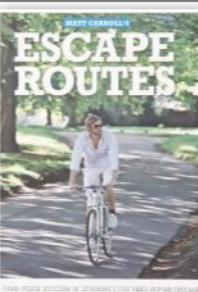
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GROUP RIDES 2014

High life in Portugal

Lucky enough to be reporting from Portugal, Chris Chapman tells us all about his autumnal ride taking on the Skyroad Granfondo — Aldeias do Xisto (page 58) just last month.

If you've had any bike problems recently, you'll sympathise with Rebecca Charlton — Nelson's Tour de Test Valley (page 56-57). Hers didn't stop her finishing — maybe it was the lure of the free lunch at the end.

Fly with the Birdys in Northampton

While it's great to think about next year's challenges, there is still riding to be done this year. This Sunday the Birdy Bunch MK Late Autumn Sportive takes place around Northamptonshire, with 40 and 56-mile routes.

The event supports the charity Shine, raising funds for those with spina bifida and hydrocephalus.

tinyurl.com/py4q3s3



Enjoy late autumn this weekend

Let us know about your event: email us at cycling@timeinc.com

SPORTIVES | Upcoming dates

HEAD SOUTH FOR SOME WINTER SUN

Sun, sea and cycling

The lure of warmer climes can be that glimmer of hope we need to get us through the winter months. When you can incorporate your riding into that warm weather fantasy, it becomes all the better.

Cycle Algarve has a few different packages to choose from if you fancy rolling along Portuguese roads. The firm caters for any type of cyclist: those training hard for road racing and every

level of more leisurely rider, with post-ride lounging by the pool appealing to all. Airport transfers, accommodation, lifts to the start and end of rides and pre-programmed GPS are provided. Back-up vehicles can also be arranged. You might also spot a few familiar faces in the passing peloton, scoping out the roads of the 41st Tour of the Algarve.

www.cyclealgarve.co.uk



Ultimate challenge of the Chiltern 100

Twenty-two hills over 110 miles? It must be the Chiltern 100 sportive. Entries are now open if you fancy taking on this event on May 31, 2015.

The brainchild of local St Albans rider Eddie Spriggs, of Verulam Cycling Club, the Gran Fondo racks up 2,700m of climbing. The 76-mile Medio Fondo might not take on all 22 hills but it still packs a punch with 1,897m of ascent.

www.humanrace.co.uk/cycling



Head to the hills next May

Grateley, Hampshire, September 20 2014

Nelson's Tour de Test Valley

A TRIBUTE RIDE for pro snowboarder and cycling enthusiast, Nelson Pratt, has become one of the season's premium sportive meetings, as *Rebecca Charlton* discovers

www.nelsonstourdevalley.co.uk



When we arrived at the start area in Pratt's Farm, Grateley, it reminded me of a festival; a bit like the weekends away I'd had as a youngster at mountain bike events in the '90s.

We were greeted with a field of tents, VW vans, cases of beer ready for the evening, and lots of smiling faces.

It didn't seem like the usual bunch of sportive riders I came across on a Sunday morning. Now, I'm not suggesting for a minute that cladding yourself in Lycra isn't damn cool, but these looked like they'd stumbled out of a fashion catalogue.

Nelson Pratt, pro snowboarder

Distance
50 miles

Total ascent
733 Metres

Participants
850

and keen cyclist, took his own life in June 2012. Board sport stars who'd worked with him over the years and friends and fans had all got on their bikes in his loving memory. Nelson had loved the Test Valley and so it became his event and I think he'd be very proud of it.

There were plenty of famous faces in attendance; Winter Olympic star Jenny Jones and Ski Sunday presenter Ed Leigh, were cheering people off in the morning, before taking on the distance themselves.

The snowboard community brought a relaxed vibe to this event and I've never experienced so much kindness from fellow riders. When we arrived a few people asked if I'd ridden last year and when I said no they gave me a bit of a face.

I then panicked that I really should have at least scanned the course profile as it must have contained some hideous climbs. But no, the course was entirely manageable, however I was told that almost everyone had punctured the year before as the lanes here have a fair bit of countryside grit.

Focusing on the Test

Inflation rate

I thought I had a pretty bulletproof set of winter rubber but a few miles into the ride I heard the dreaded hiss of air escaping my front tyre.

No problem, I fixed it while colleague Sarah waited for me. A group of riders passed and asked if we were OK. We then caught

Where to stay

Norton Park

Wincheser, SO21 3NB
It may be a 15 minute drive to the start line but it's set in 54 acres, has spa facilities and room service.
www.qhotels.co.uk/our-locations/norton-park/

York Lodge

Five Bells Lane, SO20 8HE
A small guest house just under five miles from HQ.
www.york-lodge.co.uk

Where to eat

The Plough Inn

Chapel Lane, Grateley, SP11 8JR
There's food at the finish but if you're making a weekend out of it this traditional country pub has a varied menu and some real ales.
01264 889221
www.ploughinngrateley.co.uk



Non-timed sportive that failed to attract no fewer than 850 participants



On the count of three...



A post-ride gulp of the good stuff

NELSON PRATT: A TRIBUTE

In loving memory of..

The routes take in snowboarder and cyclist Nelson Pratt's favourite training rides where he spent many a happy hour on his beloved 'Treader'.

The queen stage of Nelson's event, the 160km (100 mile) route offers a tough test, taking in the area's best climbs, and was Nelson's first 100-mile route and remained his favourite ever ride.

You'll have a free lunch waiting for you at the end and loads of beer and soft drinks on sale, plus a party vibe for the rest of the weekend.

This is a non-profit charity event, all proceeds and 100 per cent of money raised will go directly to its official charity partner CALM, Campaign Against Living Miserably.

them back up as they stopped for a puncture. This happened for a few miles, yo-yo'ing with riders we'd seen earlier in the day, all finding it pretty hilarious. There was a fair bit of swearing but the sun was shining, the route was idyllic and everyone was in such good spirits, we didn't really care. One guy with long, flowing hair had a radio attached to the rear of his bike, playing tunes as he cruised along. We later saw him having a few beers at a pub en route to the finish.

Punctures soon became the least of our worries. I bent my chainring beyond repair (or so I thought). I'd sort of moved into a ditch to



let a vehicle pass, then upon applying pressure to the pedals heard a crunching noise as I ripped the remaining bolts out of my chainset and made a big fold in the inner ring. Don't ask! We needed a mechanic! We called the emergency number on the back of our sportive card — a godsend. I'd never thought about it before but

if something goes wrong it's brilliant to know help will be at hand. The broom wagon found me and upon taking one glance at my chainring, asked if I'd been power training and told me to hop in.

It wasn't far to the feed zone where I met mechanic Gary of Gary's Bikes. He spent a while with a mallet, found some replacement bolts and got me back on the road. What a guy!

Back on my way I went, and thankfully, no more punctures. There's nothing on this route that will be beyond the abilities of any rider; there was a 10 per cent section in the last leg of the medium route but if all else fails, get off and walk!

Aldeias do Xisto, Portugal, October 11 2014

Skyroad Granfondo

www.skyroad-granfondo.com | facebook.com/skyroad.GF



Chris Chapman

There was a definite chill in the air and the leaves were beginning to turn as we headed off from the start town of Lousã. The two-mile stretch out from town was to prove the only flat section encountered all day.

I was soon into the climbing: first up to Góis, where a cobbled section delivered us to a Roman bridge crossing the crystal clear River Ceira. After Góis, the road continued to climb steadily then more steeply as the route passed the first of the Aldeias do Xisto,

Getting there

Easyjet, Ryanair, British Airways and TAP (Air Portugal) all offer daily flights to Lisbon or Porto from major UK airports. Lousã is about a two-hour drive from the airport. All the major hire car companies have outlets at either airport.

Where to Stay

Hotel Melia Palácio da Lousã

Rua Viscontessa de Espinhal 3200-357, Lousã

This is the accreditation centre, located in the ride's start village. Tel: +351 239 990 800

www.palaciodelousa.com

Villa Pampilhosa Hotel

Rua Arlindo de Almeida Esteves, Lote 8E 3320-242 Pampilhosa da Serra

Tel: +351 235 590 010

www.villapampilhosahotel.com

Where to eat

Taberna Burguesa

Rua do Comércio, 35, Lousã

Great tapas and sangria.

+351 239 996 311

Mimosa Da Beira

Foz de Arouce, Lousã

Good value, typical local food.

+351 239 991 488

Distance

**100
km**

Total ascent

**4,100
metres**

Participants

1,015

a network of old villages built from shist that pepper the route and give the event its name. Achingly beautiful honeyed-stone buildings clung to terraces above clear mountain streams as goat bells clanked. The first categorised climb of Serra de Açor beckoned, although I'd already climbed over 1,000m in the first 43km. As the olive trees and vines slowly gave way to rocks and heather, the elastic snapped on the little group that I'd been in as my heart rate soared.

Uphill battle

Once on the ridge the views were panoramic. I could see why it was called 'Skyroad'. A strong wind battered the riders across the top, as the road bucked across the ridge; and a steep descent past the scary-looking dam of Santa Luzia saw me hit 80kph before the road bent away to begin the second major climb. Gears rattled as everyone went from 50x11 to 34x28. What the climb lacked in length it made up for in steepness:

significant sections of 25 per cent over the course of its 1.58km. The next climb up from the feed station at Pampilhosa de Serra was both steeper, longer and, moreover, cobbled. Both climbs had drumming groups beating out a rhythm on enormous bass drums — it felt like going to war.

A touch of cramp and a mini-meltdown over the summit of the climb from Pampilhosa de Serra soon gave way to fresher-feeling legs. The sign of a broken hammer signified that the ride was cracked at the Serra de Lousã summit, the highest point of the day at a touch under 1,000m.

Helpers at the top were handing out newspapers to protect against the chill of the descent — a nice touch for the final exhilarating 18km descent through chestnut woods to the finish. Overall, it was a tough seven hours in the saddle along smooth, traffic-free roads in the Tuscany of Portugal.



Next year's Skyroads will be on July 12 and September 13

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MENS CRASH T-SHIRT: BLACK

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RANGE

MENS BICYCLE T-SHIRT: INDIGO

Combed 100% organic cotton, slim fitting



£26



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RANGE

WOMENS REFLECTIVE WHEEL T-SHIRT

This garment uses light-reflective ink, this bamboo cotton t-shirt will help you be seen in low light. Both the front & rear are printed using silver light reflective ink. Combined with 30% organic cotton and 70% bamboo, bamboo fabric is super soft and also double ups as an ideal base layer for colder weather. Naturally odour resistant.



A natural performance fabric

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RANGE

WOMENS CRASH T-SHIRT: LT BLUE

Combed 100% organic cotton, slim fitting



£26



ROUTE CYCLING
RANGE

Men's sizing: Small 35-37 inch chest, Medium 38-40 inch chest, Large 41-43 inch chest. All slim fitting. Women's sizing: Small - Size 10, Medium - Size 12, Large - Size 14, XL - Size 16 (UK Ladies Dress Size)

SUPERSTAR COMPONENTS

1 SUPERSTAR C32 CARBON WHEELSET

The high-temperature resin system results in an elevated Tg (Glass-Transition) temperature for superior performance in high-heat and demanding braking conditions. They are race proven in the most demanding conditions including the Tour de France, Giro d'Italia and Vuelta a Espana. Built in the UK with Sapim Laser spokes and alloy nipples, these wheels are light, stiff and backed up by our comprehensive support package



NORMAL PRICE £599.99

WITH SPECIAL OFFER CODE £349.99

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2 PACENTIS SL23 VOLTA WHEELSET

Pacentis new SL23 rim is designed to be wider to allow a rounder profile tyre for speed, comfort and aerodynamics. The Volta 11S is our new high speed hub designed to be a worldbeater with the best SKF Brand bearings and precision machining. Built in the UK with Sapim Laser spokes and alloy nipples, these wheels are light, stiff and backed up by our comprehensive support package.



NORMAL PRICE £299.99 WITH SPECIAL OFFER CODE £169.99 SAVING 41% USE CODE CWSL23

3 SUPERSTAR RACER SADDLE

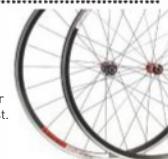
A race-oriented saddle with a carbon injected base, oversized monocoque carbon rails and vinyl cover with minimalist design.



NORMAL PRICE £79.99 WITH SPECIAL OFFER CODE £39.99 SAVING 50% USE CODE CWRACER

4 SUPERSTAR RSR STRAIGHTPULL WHEELSET

8:16 straight pull wheelset designed to offer the maximum performance for minimal cost. Superlight durable components with sealed cartridge bearings for long life. Radial / 3 cross pattern offers ultra lightweight performance with no loss of power transmission. Superstar RSR490 rims are stiff and light, specifically manufactured for us offering great performance at an amazing price..



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The Xenon Carbon seatpost is a nice sturdy layback design with plenty of adjustment and a solid clamping system. Manufactured as a single piece of carbon rather than a weak bonded-in design it uses carbon rail clamps and high modulus construction to make an ultralight yet strong post. 350mm long with 20mm offset, includes seat height limiter so you don't scratch the logos while inserting the post.



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BUYABIKE

1 CLUB ROOST R50

SHADOW CARBON-ALLOY CLINCHER WHEELS 10-SPD SHIMANO



- All wheels hand-built to highest standards.

- Aero spokes.

- Includes shimano freehub and skewers.

Last few. See website for details. Grab a bargain.

**SRP £754 - BUYABIKE PRICE £429
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- All wheels hand-built to highest standards. Tour tested. Winners of JR Tour Wales 2012.

- Sapim spokes.

- Includes shimano freehub and skewers.

Last few. See website for details. Grab a bargain.

SRP £1006.99 - BUYABIKE PRICE £529 NOW WITH FREE WHEEL BAG + SHIMANO 5700C PEDALS

3 CLUB ROOST FCR50

FULL CARBON CLINCHER WHEELS 10-SPD SHIMANO



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- Sapim spokes.

- Includes shimano freehub and skewers.

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**SRP £1128.99 - BUYABIKE PRICE £524.99
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4 CROPS BIKE LIGHTS - BUY 1 GET 1 FREE



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These pages feature only a small selection of the many fantastic bargains offered this week. To see a complete list, go to www.cyclingweekly.co.uk/bargains or scan the QR code with your smart phone.



WEBSTERS

1 ROVAL PAVE SL 25 WHEELSET £300 WITH FREE PAIR SPECIALIZED ESPOIR ELITE TYRES WORTH £50



The Pave SL 25 combines classic style with high-performance. A wide 19mm internal rim width provides a better tyre profile for the smoothest ride possible. This wheelset is equally at home, on a cross race course or a weekend endurance ride. Pave SL 25 - FASTER EVERYWHERE. Rim Width: 19mm, Internal: 26mm, External: Front Spoke Pattern: radial Rear Spoke Pattern: radial/2-cross (2:1) Spoke Count: 20 front, 24 rear Spoke Type: DT Competition, butted, J-Bend Nipple Type: DT alloy Front Hub: Roval High Flange, sealed cartridge, alloy shell Rear Hub: Roval High Flange, sealed cartridge, 3 pawl ratchet Assembly Method: hand built. Total Wheelset Weight: 1,690g Rider Weight Limit: 240lb (108kg)

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2 ALTURA WOMENS PROGEL BIBSHORTS 2014



A high performance female friendly bib for the serious rider. • Highly durable soft touch stretch fabric • 8 panel pre-shaped bib design for ultimate comfort and fit • Women's Pro Gel stretch multi density insert • Specific pre-shaped women's cut designed bib • Silicone leg grippers to keep firmly in place • Reflective trim details for increased visibility • Performance fit 80% Nylon 20% Polyurethane

RRP £59.99 OFFER PRICE £54.99

3 EXUSTAR EPS-R LOOK KEO TYPE PEDALS



THESE PEDALS HAVE ALL THE FEATURES OF A LOOK KEO CLASSIC AT THE FRACTION OF THE COST Lightweight, Thermoplastic body 128g/pedal Body Engineering thermoplastic, black. Axle CNC-machined Cr-Mo (cartridge). Bearings LSL bushing & sealed. Binding Fiber-glass reinforced thermoplastic, tension adjustable. Cleats E-ARC11. Completely Look Keo compatible Included

RRP £47.99 WEBSTERS CYCLES PRICE £23.99

4 M-PART TORQUE WRENCH



High quality precision torque wrench, a must for all enthusiasts. Adjustable from 3 to 15 Nm for most stems, handlebars, seatposts etc. Including M3, M4, M5, M6, M8, M10 and T25 sockets. Small and easy to use including storage box. A must for all home mechanics.

RRP £49.99 SPECIAL OFFER £35.99
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5 SPECIALIZED STARTER KIT



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1 ARINA CORSE HELMET + FREE

ARINA HELMET BAG WORTH £4.99 (SRP)



FREE HELMET BAG WORTH £4.99 (SRP)

Super-cool, super-light helmet offering 23 vents feeding into strategic internal channels for optimum airflow. Adjustment is quick and easy through the one-handed Click-Lock wheel. Three primary colour options match a huge range of club kits.

RRP £72.99 BIKE IT VOUCHER PRICE £45.07
+ FREE ARINA HELMET BAG - QUOTE FREEBIES (UNTIL NOV 21ST)

2 ARINA QUEST HELMET + FREE

ARINA HELMET BAG WORTH £4.99 (SRP)



FREE HELMET BAG WORTH £4.99 (SRP)

A true light weight in it's class, Quest offers 17 vents, one-handed size adjuster, integrated bug net and four colour options all wrapped up in a 265g package.

RRP £46.99 BIKE IT VOUCHER PRICE £29.01
+ FREE ARINA HELMET BAG - QUOTE FREEBIES (UNTIL NOV 21ST)

3 ARINA PRIME HELMET + FREE

ARINA HELMET BAG WORTH £4.99 (SRP)



FREE HELMET BAG WORTH £4.99 (SRP)

If you're buying your kids a bike for Christmas, don't forget a helmet for them too. Arina Prime offers adult features in kid's sizes - In-Mold construction, lots of big vents, a bug net, quick and easy size adjuster.

RRP £23.99 BIKE IT VOUCHER PRICE £14.81
+ FREE ARINA HELMET BAG - QUOTE FREEBIES (UNTIL NOV 21ST)

4 EIGO Logic Long Sleeve Jersey



Roubaix long sleeve jersey, great for autumn rides or as part of a winter layering system. Athletic cut for optimum performance and packed with features such as full-length zip, rear cargo pockets, reflective prints etc.

RRP £44.99 BIKE IT VOUCHER PRICE £34.19
+ FREE EIGO NECK TUBE - QUOTE FREEBIES (UNTIL NOV 21ST)

5 EIGO Holly Women's Long Sleeve Jersey



Mini-waffle fabric with lightly brushed lining for comfort and warmth. Great on its own for autumn rides or as part of a winter layering system. Full length zip, cargo pockets and reflective logos are some of the features.

RRP £49.99 BIKE IT VOUCHER PRICE £37.99
+ FREE EIGO NECK TUBE - QUOTE FREEBIES (UNTIL NOV 21ST)

Main Website

www.bikeit.co.uk

eBay Store ebay.eu/1tzohu9

Amazon Store amzn.to/1qzFV3F



CYCLE DIVISION

1 Trigon 2014 TR426 Frameset



-New from Trigon for 2014 is the TR426 model, borrowing much of the award winning technology and ride performance from its predecessor the RQC29 the TR426 brings outstanding performance and ride quality at a lower price point than the RQC29.

-Full handmade HM Nano Carbon UCI approved frame

-Frame Size from XS-XL available

RRP £999.99

CYCLE DIVISION PRICE £649.99 35% SAVING

2 RST Premium Rain Jacket



The RST 2014 Premium line Heavy-weight rain jacket is designed to keep you dry, warm and visible on those commutes to work or MTB trails.

This robust Hi Viz rian jacket is available in 2 colours -Hi

Viz 3M detail for maximum visibility
-Fully sealed waterproof zips -Under arm zip panel for increased ventilation -Velcro wrist adjustment to dial in fit -Big rear pocket for max storage -Side pockets for extra storage -High neck with elasticated toggle adjustment

RRP £44.99 NOW £34.99 22% SAVING

3 RST Premium line 2014 Rucksack cover



The RST Hi Viz rucksack cover is designed to keep your bags contents dry on those work commutes; The Hi Viz 3M reflective detail keeps you visible.

-Manufactured from waterproof material
-Fits Bags Approx. 10-30 litres -2 mesh rear pockets for easy access storage and light attachment
-Elasticated underside to ensure secure rap around fit of bag -Elasticated press stud poppers for secure fit

CYCLE DIVISION PRICE £9.99

4 RST Premium Line 2014 Thermal bib tights



- The RST Premium line 2014 bib tight offers unparalleled performance for the price tag, the Miti super roubaix material provides exceptional warmth, this thermal fabric ensures good range of movement, with a brushed fleece lining to keep you warm. The bib tights are without insert

-Anatomical cut

-Mesh construction on bib for enhanced breathability -Flat lock coloured stitching detail

-Foot loops for secure retention

-Front zip for easy on/off

CYCLE DIVISION PRICE £34.99

5 Cero Garmin Mount



Our Cero Garmin mount is compatible with 200, 500, 510, 800, 810 models and provides an out front viewing so all your data is in your field of vision

-Manufactured from a Nylon composite with a Stainless bolt -Fits 31.6mm bar -Weight: 21g
-Secure fixture, no vibration

CYCLE DIVISION PRICE £7.99

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1 2015 Campagnolo Athena Groupset Black 11 Speed

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2 Muc-Off Nano Gel 500ml Pouch BOGOF Promo

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5 Shimano Di2 Ultegra 6870 11 Spd Upgrade Kit

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2 Giant Defy Composite 3 Road Bike

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4 Saracen Tenet 42 Road Bike

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CYCLO-CROSS

NORTH-WEST CYCLO-CROSS ASSOC LEAGUE

SUN 9/11

SENIOR/JUNIOR/WOMEN

Giles Drake (Leisure Lakes Bikes.com); 2, S. Wilson (Manchester Wh); 3, M. Woffindin (Cycle Sport Pendle); 4, T. Fowler (Worcester Cycle Centre); 5, J. Peatfield (Horwich CC); 6, A. Bonnar (Chorlton Velo); 7, D. Powell (Horwich CC); 8, A. Newall (Horwich CC); 9, M. Wardle (Wheelbase Altura MGD); 10, T. Jones (Cycle Sport Pendle).

VETS/WOMEN

Adrian Lawrence (Team Elite); 2, K. Ashbridge (Velo Club Cumbria); 3, M. Style (Manchester Wh Club); 4, C. James (Beacon Wh); 5, J. Hartley (Horwich CC); 6, P. Davies (Cycle Wise Altura); 7, J. Murfin (JEDI Cycle Sport); 8, A. Brindle (Horwich CC); 9, S. Green (Oldham Century); 10, P. Howarth (Manchester Wh).

YOUTH

Mark Donovan (Beacon Wh); 2, L. Hartley (Velocity WD-40); 3, C. Edmondson (Cycle Sport Pendle); 4, M. Hall (Furness Future Flyers); 5, A. Leivers (Blackpool Youth Cycle Association); 6, T. Loftus (Furness Future Flyers); 7, I. Peatfield (Bolton Hot Wheels CC); 8, T. Martin (Furness Future Flyers); 9, M. Egglestone (Beacon Wh); 10, N. Hawthorn (Cycle Sport Pendle).

LINCOLNSHIRE CYCLO-CROSS LEAGUE 7

SUN 9/11

SENIORS

George Thompson (Sleaford Wh); 2, M. Cotton (BikeBox Alan); 3, G. Whittall (Zepnat); 4, B. Dalton (Kinesis Morvelo Project); 5, A. Cadle (Not Attached).

VETS/JUNIORS/WOMEN

Rick Lister (Ellmore Factory Racing); 2, M. Williamson (BikeBox Alan); 3, H. Thompson

(Sleaford Wh); 4, D. Hewson (BikeBox Alan); 5, P. Roach (Team Jewson).

INTER AREA CYCLO-CROSS TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

SUN 9/11

SENIORS

Wales A; 2, Yorkshire A; 3, East Midlands A; 4, North-East A; 5, Yorkshire B.

WOMEN

Yorkshire A; 2, East Midlands A; 3, Yorkshire B; 4, West Midlands A; 5, London A.

VETERAN

Yorkshire A; 2, Yorkshire B; 3, North-East A; 4, West Midlands A; 5, Central A.

INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

SENIOR MEN

Jack Clarkson (Yorkshire); 2, S. Roach (Wales); 3, T. Fawcett (North-East); 4, L. Williams (Wales); 5, J. Waters (West Midlands); 6, G. Drake (North-West); 7, J. Thompson (East Midlands); 8, A. Stuart (East Midlands); 9, B. Harding (Yorkshire); 10, D. Kerfoot-Robson (Wales).

WOMEN

Annabel Simpson (Yorkshire); 2, A. Mellor (Yorkshire); 3, L. Mahé (London); 4, A. Carter (Yorkshire); 5, D. Lee (East Midlands); 6, R. Preece (North-West); 7, V. Appleyard (West Midlands); 8, K. George (East Midlands); 9, T. Fletcher (East Midlands); 10, S. Murray (North-East).

VETERANS

James Sharp (Yorkshire); 2, I. Taylor (Yorkshire); 3, A. Peace (Yorkshire); 4, A. Glover (North-East); 5, M. Simpson (Central); 6, D. Atkins (West Midlands); 7, N. Clough (Yorkshire); 8, D. Gee (North-East); 9, M. Calvert (Central); 10, C. Young (Yorkshire).

YOUTH BOYS

Thomas Mein (North-East); 2, J. Armstrong (East Midlands); 3, M. Parry (Eastern); 4, M. Donovan (North-West); 5, E. Cameron (Yorkshire).

YOUTH GIRLS

Megan James (Wales); 2, S. Thackray (Yorkshire); 3, E. Smith (East Midlands); 4, M. Gammons (East Midlands); 5, R. Stoves (North-East).

WEST MIDLANDS CYCLO-CROSS LEAGUE 8

SUN 2/11

SENIOR MEN

George Moore (Bicicielo); 2, D. Montgomery (Not attached); 3, D. Harris (Stourbridge CC); 4, T. Payton (Islabikes); 5, J. Hicks (Rugby Velo); 6, A. Lewis (Terra Safety Shoes); 7, P. Hinch (Brotherton Cycles); 8, J. Atkins (Ride Coventry); 9, P. Bowater (Starley Primal Pro Cycling); 10, J. Garrett (Rugby Velo).

JUNIOR/VET/WOMEN

Ewan Grivell-Mellor (Mid Shropshire Wh); 2, A. Neave (Stourbridge CC); 3, J. Garratt (Welland Valley CC); 4, T. Gould (www.zepnat.com/GSG Clothing); 5, C. Biddle (Solihull CC); 6, M. Davies (Pedal Power Loughborough) 7, P. Roach (Team Jewson-M.I Racing-PolyPIPE); 8, I. Wright (Not attached); 9, P. Busby (Team Jewson-M.I Racing-PolyPIPE); 10, K. Payton (Stourbridge CC).

YOUTH

Harry Yates (Hargroves Cycles-Ridley RT); 2, L. Askey (Lichfield City CC); 3, T. Barnes (Lichfield City CC); 4, D. Dighton (Halesowen A&CC); 5, B. Wilmot (Derby Mercury RC); 6, M. Lewis (Wolverhampton Wh); 7, S. Morris (Wolverhampton Wh); 8, J. Knight (Solihull CC); 9, D. Round (Mid Shropshire Wh); 10, H. Rollason (Lichfield City CC).

Photo: Cor Vos

INTERNATIONAL

CYCLO-CROSS EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

SAT 8/11

Sanne Cant (Bel) in 45-57; 2, P. Havlikova (Cze) at 3sec; 3, N. Harris (GBR) at 5sec; 4, H. Wyman (GBR) at 12sec; 5, E. Van Loy (Bel); 6, J. Verschueren (Bel) both at 27sec; 7, S. Van Paassen (Ned) at 35sec; 8, R. Gamonal Ferrera (Esp) at 36sec; 9, M. Petit (Fra) at 56sec; 10, L. Chaine (Fra) at 1-39.

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BOB JACKSON (RE SPRAYED) 55cm track bike fully Campagnolo/Cinelli equipped. Mavic CXP14 deep rim wheels on Campagnolo Pista hubs. All in barely used condition. £625. Surrey (Redhill). Tel: 07947 777777. Email address: kelv59@hotmail.co.uk 20/11



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Dr. Hutch

THE DOC WEIGHS up the benefits (or levels of uselessness) of multi-tools, and finds that usually all you need for a roadside repair is a 5mm Allen key

doctorhutch_cycling@ipcmedia.com

Long ago, when I was young, I was too poor to get a multi-tool to take with me on rides. (I use 'poor' in the sense of 'incompetent', and 'young' in the sense of 'about 28'.) I made my own by getting a 5mm Allen key and putting it in my pocket.

This was rather effective. Other than repairing a chain, most of the things you might want to deal with, and which you can realistically fix by the roadside, need a 5mm Allen key.

Then I moved on to a real multi-tool. It had not only a chain splitter, but a socket set, spoke keys, and a cone spanner, so you could adjust your cup-and-cone wheel bearings in far-flung places. And a rather nice, detachable, 5mm Allen key that after a few

weeks was the only bit I ever actually took with me. And it still is today.

This experience inspired me to devise a coefficient of uselessness for multi-tools. It is this: divide the number of functions by the weight. The higher this number, the more useless the tool will be in any given breakdown.

All the gear, no idea

My friend Bernard, it will not surprise you, has a multi-tool that claims to be a complete workshop while weighing nothing at all, so has a coefficient that might as well be infinity. He carries it in a natty little seat pack, along with a pump that's only slightly larger than an amputated thumb, and of about just as much use for inflating a tyre.

The tool's weight turned out to have another disadvantage. On a ride last week, after he'd complained for 30 miles that his

"It had a detachable Allen key that after a few weeks was the only bit I ever took with me"

ACTS OF CYCLING STUPIDITY

I set off from a station in London to ride to a meeting about 20 minutes away. There were a few spots of rain and no rain forecast. I decided that it was not going to amount to anything. Five minutes later, in the midst of a downpour that had reduced the mid-morning sky to darkness, and had water bouncing off the road and up my trousers, I began to admit to the possibility I'd misjudged things.

At my destination, there was horror at my potential as a liability if I got hypothermia on their premises, and the sheer quantity of water I was dripping onto their reception floor, creating potential further liability as a slip hazard. I ended up being coerced into changing into a somewhat too-small bathrobe someone found in the company gym. The meeting did not go at all well.



gears were flicking from sprocket to sprocket all on their own, he stopped for an inspection. It was simple — the rear mech had unscrewed itself from the frame, and was now wobbling about, on the verge of falling off altogether and into the back-wheel spokes. He needed a 5mm Allen-key.

Bernard took out his amazing multi-tool and prepared to mechanic. The 5mm bit was too stubby (and to be fair, light, though I didn't point this out) to reach the head of the recessed bolt. Bernard paused. The air was pregnant with rage. But when he hurled his feather-light tool at a wall in fury, it didn't have the momentum, or do enough damage, to pacify him.

"Give me your multi-tool," he said to me.

"I don't have one," I said. It happened to be the truth, depending

a little on your view of a 5mm Allen key wrapped in a £5 note, but I don't blame him for not believing me. It was clearly what I'd have said even if I'd had a bike shop and Ernie the Team GB mechanic in my pockets.

Magic mechanics

This was an impasse. To break the tension, I told Bernie a story from when I was at school. A group of us got back from a trip to find a badly parked car blocking the school gate. This meant the teacher couldn't park the minibus, or retrieve his own car. One of our number — a streetwise 16-year-old from an iffy area of Belfast — said, "Sir, why don't all you take a walk round the block? You might be lucky." When we got back, both car and kid were gone.

"So if you went and stood over there, and faced the other way," I said, "you might be lucky." He scowled at me, but did as I suggested. I took out my secret Allen key and tightened up his gear mech. "How about that?" I said. "The bike mechanic fairies have been kind to you, Bernie."

He clattered back over on his cleats. "You're a patronising arse, has anyone ever told you that?" he hissed. The rest of the ride passed in silence, and I enjoyed it very much.



CYCLING GREATS

Frank Southall

(1904-1964)



With Hour records all the flavour, it's time to look at probably the most iconic of British Hour record holders, the charismatic and popular London plasterer Frank Southall of the Norwood Paragon club.

His first British Hour record was set at Herne Hill on May 26 1925, at the age of just 20. His distance was 25 miles 1,520 yards. Or, as *Cycling* magazine gamely translated, 41.623 "kilometres" in "foreign measurements". In 1926 he improved this to break the world amateur Hour with 26 miles 838 yards (42.469km). (The professional Hour was Oscar Egg's 44.247km from 1914.)

He was allegedly the victim of foreign skulduggery at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics. 'Bunched racing' being an activity favoured only by the kind of pervert who measured things in metres, the British applied much pressure to have the road race run as a monster 102.5-mile (165km) time trial.

The assumption was that Southall would win this easily. Yet the Dane, Henry Hansen, at one point took seven minutes out of him in just 21 miles, and went on to win comfortably. The British claimed Hansen had taken a shortcut, but the only evidence was simply that the mighty Southall had been beaten. He won another silver for the team road race, and a pursuit bronze four years later in Los Angeles.

In 1934 he turned pro, undaunted by there being no professional racing in the UK. He devoted his pro career to beating place-to-place records, such as London to Brighton and back.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

DAN McLAY

There's a reason why the Bretagne-Séché rookie turned to cycling at a young age — he's useless at all other sports. He's not so bad at cooking, though

George, the cat who I live with in Belgium, is a good guy. If I had my own pet, however, it would be a dog. I love George, though.

I like cooking something decent up from time to time. I'm not an obsessive but I don't mind throwing a meal together. At the moment I'm into salmon tagliatelle. My favourite dish changes from month to month.

This is quite dull for the magazine but I'm a lazy devil. I'm pretty boring when I'm not riding. I don't do an awful lot. I take it easy and maybe go on the internet. Not that interesting.

It only took me a week to learn how to say everything on the food menu when I moved to Belgium. It's a good country to live in. There's the odd thing I miss from home but there are a lot more riders for me to train with here than in England.

I saw a Russian rider somersault over a low wall during a stage at this year's Tour de l'Avenir. It was the start of the 10km neutral section as well. It made us all laugh.

I try to stay clear of bike maintenance. I can just about fix a bike but I'd rather leave it to a mechanic otherwise it would cost me a fortune in repairing the bits I've broken.



NEXT WEEK: AVOID WINTER TRAINING MISTAKES, BUDGET WINTER JACKETS, GRANFONDO ROMA, PLUS FITNESS, NEWS, NOTICEBOARD, RIDES & MUCH MORE...

Tweets of the week



Matt Clinton
@Matty Clinton
Sore throat. Struggling to yawn. What happens if you get a yawn trapped, is it dangerous?



Grayson Perry
@Alan_Measles
My new sport, MAMIL baiting. I ride round Regents Park on my heavy Dutch bike and pick off the weak ones. Like the wild dogs on Life Story



Helen Wyman
@CXHelen
One of those 'use up food from fridge' days. Making curry, kale is good, the kale is off, spinach is good, spinach is off, sprouts it is then!

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I was terrible with sports that required coordination. I did play rugby for a bit at secondary school and I was alright but that was the exception. I'm poor at most sports.

I'm a big Arctic Monkeys and Kasabian fan; especially with Kasabian being from Leicester, where I grew up. I haven't seen either of them live, though.

I've only been to Italy racing but I'd love to see more of it and spend time there. I need to take a few weeks trying out all their local delicacies. It's not so much the pasta but their general cooking that is amazing.

Cycling
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"It will be dry everywhere except on the route from Widnes to Luton"



"They say he's thinking of retiring at the end of next season."



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